



**High performance work system (HPWS) and employee performance:
Evidence from the Multinational subsidiaries in Bangladesh**

By

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Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

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Declaration of Authorship

I hereby certify that the thesis I am submitting is entirely my own original work except where otherwise indicated. I am aware of the University's regulations concerning plagiarism, including those regulations concerning disciplinary actions that may result from plagiarism. Any use of the works of any other author, in any form, is properly acknowledged at their point of use.

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Dedication

To my Husband, Aminur Rahman

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I would like to thank *Almighty Allah* for making my dream come true. Without His guidance and blessings, it was not going to be possible for me to pursue my goal.

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Abstract

Despite the growing body of research examining the impact of high-performance work system (HPWS) and organisational performance, it is still unclear how HPWS practices result in desirable individual level employee performance, especially in the South Asian context. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to fill the existing gap by empirically examining the relationship between high performance work system (HPWS) and employees' performance, exploring the mediating role of employees' attitudes and the moderating role of institutional context in a high-tech multinational corporation's multinational corporations (MNCs) in Bangladesh. The study developed a conceptual model based on the knowledge gap in the existing literature.

The study has adopted a mixed method research approach to answer the research question, where a quantitative phase was followed by a qualitative phase. In the quantitative phase of the study, the conceptual model is tested using structural equation modelling (SEM) with the help of the IBM SPSS software version 21. The survey was comprised of 320 employee-level data sets from three selected telecom organisations operating in Bangladesh. The qualitative phase of the study was used to verify quantitative findings and provide insights that were difficult to gain by surveys alone. The qualitative phase of the research examines the manager's perception of HPWS in the studied organisation based on a sample size of 9 semi-structured interviews. The interview data were analysed through thematic analysis.

Consistent with the ability-motivation-opportunity (AMO) theory, the findings support that utilization of HPWS is related to enhanced levels of employee attitudes such as job satisfaction, affective commitment and trust in management. Furthermore, these attitudinal variables were positively linked to enhanced employees' performance. The study also provides insights by demonstrating that the institutional contexts of a country negatively moderate the relationship between HPWS and employees' performance. The findings suggest that high tech telecom organisations operating in Bangladesh need to devote substantial resources to adapt HPWS to enhance employees' positive attitudes, which in turn will positively impact employees' performance. Equal importance should be given to the institutional context of a country while executing HPWS because such processes encourage fair procedures and result in positive employees' performance.

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List of Abbreviations

AMO	Ability-motivation-opportunity
ASEAN	The Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AC	Affective Commitment
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HRM	Human Resource Management
HPWS	High performance work systems
IHRM	International Human Resource Management
JS	Job satisfaction
MNC	Multinational Corporation
PDI	Power Distance Index
SEM	Structural Equation Model
SHRM	Strategic Human Resource Management
TIB	Transparency International Bureau
RBV	Resource-Based View
UN	United Nations

Chapter 1

Introduction

Introduction

In a highly competitive, globalised environment where innovation and change occur continuously, organisations cannot stay still for long. Organisations come in different shapes and sizes and most frequently exhibit dissimilarities than similarities. However, there is at least one aspect that all organisations share: it is their dependency on their employees' skills, knowledge and abilities to succeed (Mello, 2011; Armstrong, 2014), which primarily relate to adding economic value to the organisation (Gberevbie, 2010). Therefore, it can be inferred that in the knowledge economy, human resources are considered organisations' most valued assets (Fu et al., 2015; Torrington et al., 2014; Wahid and Hyams-Ssekasi, 2018).

Human resource management (HRM) deals with organisations' key assets – the employees who are individually and collectively contributing to their organisational targets (Armstrong, 2014). Predominantly, personnel management is related to core HR functions which include recruitment, training, compensating, rewarding and evaluating employees. HR functions have expanded during the last decade and organisations realised that competitive advantage can be gained by capitalising their human resources in the organisations, which led to the concept of strategic human resource management (SHRM) (Torrington et al., 2014). SHRM is heavily dependent on the human factor within the organisation which cannot be copied, unlike the external aspects such as economic, technology or natural resources which can be replaced (Armstrong and Taylor, 2014; Fu et al., 2015; Rahman et al., 2017).

One of the main goals of a human resources (HR) department is to increase organisational performance by maximising the performance and efficiency of its employees (Huselid, 1995; Absar et al., 2012). It is therefore fair to say that human resource (HR) departments play a key role in achieving organisational goals including but not limited to prosperity. Furthermore recently, organisations have begun to realise that cutting costs and

improving technology are not the only factors that can enhance organisational performance and reach the objectives. HR strategy can play an important role in building organisations' competitive advantage. Competitiveness to a high extent determines organisations' future (Kalyani and Sahoo, 2011). In today's economy, the success of any organisation entirely depends upon its abilities to manage human resources well (Budhwar and Debrah, 2001; Wang et al., 2011; Wahid and Hyams-Ssekasi, 2018).

In the last three decades, an increasing body of research has suggested using a mix or bundles of human resource practices, alternatively known as high performance work system (HPWS), to enhance organisations' performance. Within the scope of HPWS, human resource practices are not implemented as individual practices, but rather they are integrated systems that aim to create particular workforce characteristics (Delery and Doty, 1996; Paauwe and Boselie, 2005; Messersmith et al., 2011; Wahid and Hyams-Ssekasi, 2018). The concept of HPWS originated from the field of strategic human resource management (SHRM), where a number of researchers have evaluated the impact of HPWS on organisational performance (Appelbaum, 2000; Messersmith et al., 2011; El- Ghalayini, 2016).

It is generally perceived that high performance work systems (HPWS) as HR systems denote an important notion in the workplace that would lead to superior organisational performance (Macky and Boxall, 2007, Evans and Davis, 2005). There is no particular agreed definition of HPWS due to its considerable difference between the empirical, theoretical and practical implementation (Boxall and Macky, 2009; Ubeda-Garcia et al., 2018). In this study, the definition stated by Rabl et al. (2014:3) is used, which states that HPWS is 'human resource policies and practices designed to enhance organisational performance by enhancing employees' ability, motivation and opportunity to contribute (AMO)'. The underlying assumption of AMO theory is based on employees' ability-motivation-opportunity when implementing HR practices to performance measure. In particular, individual employees are supposed to show their discretionary effort by completing their job requirement characterised

by the execution of HR practices, with a view to helping their organisation to achieve a higher level of performance (Appelbaum et al., 2000).

Although there is increasing acceptance that HPWS have a positive impact on organisations' performance, there is a lack of understanding of how this influence occurs (Wu and Chaturvedi, 2009; Messersmith and Guthrie, 2010; Muduli et al., 2016; Demirbag et al., 2014). One of the main challenges within the area of SHRM research has been the identification of the mechanisms by which HRM practices contribute to the performance of the organisation (Wright and Gardner, 2003; Muduli et al., 2016). There have been many attempts in the previous studies to unlock the so called 'black box' between HPWS and firm performance; this issue still remains unsettled (Wu and Chaturvedi, 2009; Mansour et al., 2014; Muduli et al., 2016). According to researchers the black box phenomenon reflects the processes through which the practices of HRM usually affect organisational performance or in a broader sense, it is the causal link that is initiated through HRM practices in the people and their performance (Boselie et al., 2005; Paauwe, 2009). Various conceptual models were made to understand the connection between high performance work system (HPWS) and its effects on the organisational performance. This includes human capital theory, expectancy theory, resource-based theory of the firm, behavioural science and so forth (Delaney and Huselid, 1996; Guest, 1997; Paauwe and Richardson, 1997). In essence, these theories emphasise the importance of HRM practices in affecting both employee-level and organisational level performance via their impact on employees' knowledge, skills, ability, motivation and flexibility (Tsai, 2006).

Furthermore, strategic HRM researchers found that HR practices directly affect employees' attitudes which in turn influence employee performance and organisational performance (Wu and Chaturvedi, 2009; Messersmith et al., 2011; Kahoe and Wright, 2013; Rubel et al., 2018; Ananthram et al., 2018). For example, a recent study conducted by Ananthram et al. (2018) investigated the direct and mediation effects between HPWS and

employee attitudinal variables. The study employed 250 survey data from five call centres from India. The findings suggest that Indian call centres might be benefitted by adopting HPWS since the study contributes positively towards the job satisfaction, employee engagement and wellbeing of employees. Similarly, Rubel et al. (2018) demonstrated that the high commitment human resource management (HCHRM) is positively related to employee service behavior in the banking industry. What is more, employee attitudinal variable such as trust in management mediates the relationship between HCHRM and employee service behavior.

A growing number of literatures on the international human resource management (IHRM) research is a result of the globalisation that can be seen in the overseas markets through the help of present information and communication technologies (ICT), while multinational companies become more prominent. The increasing competition among both national and international organisations, with the rapid expansion of markets in the Eastern Europe, South East Asia, India and China run parallel to the greater need of developing a clear idea of the management of the human resources active in different parts of the world (Harzing and Pinnington, 2010).

Challenges of globalisation and their effects on HR practices received positive reactions from academics proposing that different HRM approaches should be taken accordingly (Warner et al., 2005). Most of the researchers of IHRM concern themselves with the design of HRM processes in multinational companies, in relation to institutional environment, societal norms, regulations of the government and comparative analysis of HRM practices across different economies (Metcalf and Rees, 2005). Issues such as culture and acculturation are also of significant value to them as well. Still it can be seen that the theoretical models and concepts that stand out the most are based under American and European contexts. Therefore, it can be questioned as to how these Anglo-Saxon HRM

approaches can be relevant as application and experience for human resources of emerging economies such as the Asian countries (Rowley and Warner, 2007).

In addition, high performance work system is predominantly considered a western management innovation while neglecting other developing countries. As a consequence, most HPWS research has been taken place in the context of western countries, such as American and other European country context (Muduli, 2012; Posthuma et al., 2013; Ramdani et al., 2014). In a globalised world, an important question is whether HRM practices that are suitable in one country, will embrace the same mannerisms as in other countries. The nature and role of HR in a firm differ across countries and regions and between different types of organisations because of the different institutional environments of the country (Hatcher, 2006; Rabl et al., 2014). It could be argued that the labour market is different in every country because of their local culture and national managerial orientations, which influence the nature of HR practices (Dennis et al., 2009; Demirbag et al., 2014). Possibly the biggest challenge facing HR practitioners in multi-national corporations (MNCs) is how to manage business effectively at both global and local levels, to have ‘the ability to think globally but act locally’ (Hatcher, 2006: 4). This is an important issue because the country and local context have an impact on HR practices of multinational companies (Dennis et al., 2009; Demirbag et al., 2014). As a consequence, there is a need for HR in multi national companies (MNCs) to have a better understanding of other countries’ national and cultural contexts.

Culture is embedded deep inside as the foundations of the institutional environments arrange an intangible systematic code of the beliefs, acts and norms in a society (Hofstede, 1984); it is covered superficially with institutions on the top, with tangible enforcing or influencing characteristics for the members of a society to act accordingly (North, 1990). Therefore, in order to understand and study institutional environments it is necessary to evaluate the issues of culture which are interconnected with them in a significant manner. Furthermore, the culture and institutions of the societies of developed and developing

countries identify different HRM practices between them. Developing countries are generally influenced more by their culture which shapes their HRM practices in a certain way. Whereas, developed countries prefer the high enforcement mechanisms of institutions over culture as it is in a constant transformation and that determines certain characteristics of their HRM practices (Hofstede, 1984).

In case of the cultural contexts of developed countries, they are considered lower in comparison with developing economies (Hofstede, 1984). The cultures of developing countries are considered high - context; they are particularly traditional and stable throughout generations as cultures are not easily altered in order for the relationships among the people of the society to remain preserved. A low-context culture, on the other hand, identifies the developed economy to be more changeable as its context is under continual transformation with its dynamic generations. Hall (2000) demonstrates that the people of developed societies tend to be more direct in communication, being verbal and impersonal, or explicit and sometimes very straight-forward and task-focused. Cultures in developing countries are thus considered important influencing factors on their respective HRM practices.

However, substantial gaps persist in most of the aspects of HRM practices and organisational performance in MNCs (Ramirez and Mabey, 2005; Demirbag et al., 2014). MNCs operate across national boundaries with different institutional environments. Management of HR in the overseas subsidiaries of MNCs is inherently complex and challenging (Sparrow, 2007; Edwards et al., 2007; Chowdhury and Mahmood, 2012). The research on MNCs usually requires an investigation on how far the human resources operating in foreign lands are similar to that of the parent organisation and the extent to which they resemble the operations in the local organisations. The parent organisations have an internal consistency in the MNCs and thus expect certain regulations in foreign subsidiaries, although, they are also subjected to regulating rules and norms of the locality itself (Westney, 1993). The study of MNCs for HRM practitioners restricts them to follow within the structure of

integration responsiveness (Prahalad and Doz, 1987), examining subsidiary HRM practices that can be additional in order of how globally integrated they can be or the degree to which they can be termed 'MNC standardisation'. This is by adapting them to the local context according to the 'local responsiveness' of these practices. It is also important for an MNC to amalgamate what is globally standard according to the local responsiveness (Hannon et al., 1995; Taylor et al., 1996).

1.1 Research Aim

The aim of the present study is to bridge the existing gap by investigating the link between western HPWS and employees' performance in Bangladesh. The study further aims to broaden the research context by incorporating employees' performance through the mediating role of their attitudinal aspects. In addition, the study examines how normative components of institutional environments such as power distance, nepotism and favouritism affect the strength of HPWS and employees' performance in the context of multinational organisations in Bangladesh.

1.2 Research Question and objectives

The study addresses the following main research question:

To what extent does high performance work system (HPWS) impact the individual employee's performance in the Bangladeshi telecom sector?

To answer this question, the following research objectives has been pursued:

- 1) To explore the relationship between HPWS and employees' performance;
- 2) To critically analyse how HPWS impact employees' attitude, which in turn affects employees' performance; and
- 3) To examine how institutional environments, affects HPWS and employees' performance in Bangladesh.

1.3 Importance of the research

Like many other countries, the work environment in Bangladesh is going through rapid changes due to globalisation and technological changes (Titumir and Hossain, 2003). The digital revolution throughout the world has brought new challenges and opportunities for the information and communication technologies (ICT) sector's professionals (Alam, 2012). Turning Bangladesh into a digitally developed country by 2021 was one of the electoral commitments and pledges of the current government led by Awami League. The vision is widely known as 'Digital Bangladesh' (Nurunnabi and Hossain, 2012:18). In particular, digital Bangladesh means the effective utilisation of technology in the sectors of health, education, governance, poverty alleviation and market; it is also engaging all social classes of people in terms of decision making and greater accountability in a modern democratic country. In order to achieve these, Bangladesh needs a series of reforms in almost every sector, which include the telecom service industry (Nurunnabi and Hossain, 2012; Islam and Grounland, 2011).

Reasons why the telecom service industry has been selected for the present study are two-fold. First, telecom industries are a major part of information and communication technology (ICT) and the fastest growing service industry in Bangladesh. Second, the studied organisations are the top three in the telecom service industry and the biggest MNCs operating in Bangladesh. Therefore, the present study aims to expand HPWS in the context of Bangladesh which is beyond the more familiar western context. The paramount contribution of the study may potentially be to minimise the knowledge gap in the area of high performance work system (HPWS) literature by providing South Asian empirical evidence for future academic researchers and HR practitioners.

Furthermore, developing countries portray a different context for HRM practices. Relatively high unemployment rates together with a large population create an employer's market (Absar et al., 2012). In some organisations, human resources are considered more of

a cost rather than an asset to be a factor of organisational performance (Singh, 2004). Too many layoffs are conducted as a short-term strategy to improve financial performance rather than as strategic initiatives (Mello, 2011). Unfortunately, human resources cannot be categorised as conventional assets which appear in an organisation's balance sheet. What is more, organisations frequently ignore the importance of developing systematic HRM practices to gain long-term competitive advantage and rather focus more on short-term cost effective HRM measures to gain immediate outcomes (Bartram et al., 2009; Okpara and Wynn, 2007; Singh, 2004). However, it is worthwhile to mention that HR can be defined as a skilled, motivated and adaptable work force and intellectual capital, which are treated as an organisation's total assets. An employee reduction strategy can be beneficial when organisations severely suffer from an economic crisis, but they are not effective in achieving short-term payoffs. Often employees lose their loyalty and commitment which negatively impacts on their performance (Karami, 2002).

Based on previous discussions it is fair to argue that not enough country or industry specific reliable and valid research has been conducted in high performance work system (HPWS) in Bangladesh. Consequently, in the light of HPWS and being a part of SHRM studies globally, further research is required within the context of developing countries (Budhwar and Debrah, 2009; Tsui et al., 2004; Wei and Lau, 2008; Absar et al., 2012). In particular, no literature linking HPWS to performance has been found to date that studies the telecom industry in Bangladesh. Much research has been done on industrial relation (IR) issues, HR practices in local private firms and MNCs in Bangladesh (Chowdhury and Mahmood, 2012; Absar et al., 2012; Khan, 2015) and none of these are directly relevant to this present study.

Therefore, for generalisability, research on this topic should be conducted in the context of the telecom industry of Bangladesh. In addition, a study conducted by Chowdhury and Mahmood (2012) highlighted the importance of conducting research in Next Eleven (N-

11) countries that include Bangladesh, which have promising development potential. According to Goldman Sachs' financial service report, Next-11 or N-11 is a group of mostly advanced nations becoming very interesting as investment opportunities and in terms of tremendous economic growth. The N-11 nations are South Korea, Mexico, Indonesia, Turkey, Philippines, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Egypt, Pakistan and Iran (Lawson et al., 2007).

1.4 Emerging Economy of Bangladesh

Most of the South Asian countries, that is Pakistan, India and Bangladesh, have made significant economic progress in the last two decades and are moving towards becoming major regional as well as world economic powerhouses (Abdullah et al., 2011). Bangladesh is located in the developing and emerging markets of South Asia and the fastest growing economy among the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries (Abdullah et al., 2011). Bangladesh is a post-colonial country that achieved independence from British rule in 1947 along with the rest of India and Pakistan. Previously Bangladesh was named as East Pakistan. The country separated from Pakistan in 1971 through a bloody war. From that period of time, the country was ruled by various military regimes until 1990, when parliamentary democracy was guided by a new era in the history of Bangladesh (Belal and Cooper, 2011; Chowdhury and Mahmood, 2012).

Right after independence in 1971, the country followed a socialist pattern of economic growth and nationalised all of its mills and factories. However, decentralisation processes started in the late 1970's. The democratic views had some positive impacts such as periodic national elections, freedom of electronic and other media and institutional and regulatory reforms in the country. After the emergence of democratic processes in the 1990s, the government of Bangladesh mainly emphasized the open market economy led by private sector initiatives (Belal and Cooper, 2011). The restoration of democracy, although far from perfect, has brought political stability and economic development in Bangladesh. Since that

period of time, Bangladesh established its industrial base for the participation of multinational companies (MNCs). Due to this economic policy, the country attracted foreign investments and a flourishing export oriented industries. Various local organisations in these sectors supply goods and services to many large multi-national companies around the world. In addition to that many multinational organisations operate in Bangladesh through their subsidiaries. Prominent multinationals include Unilever, Glaxo, Reckitt and Benckiser and British American Tobacco (Belal and Cooper, 2011; Pulok and Ahmed, 2017).

Bangladesh has remarkably progressed well in accelerating its gross domestic product (GDP) growth in the last decade due to the expansion of industrialization and enormous contribution of foreign remittances (Pulok and Ahmed, 2017). The country is predicted to become the world's 23rd largest economy by 2050 (Mahmood and Absar, 2015). Based on the country's promising growth and future potential, a UK based research organisation Investor Chronicle, has listed Bangladesh as one of the hottest emerging markets along with Egypt, Pakistan, UAE and Nigeria (IFC, 2013). On the other hand, the Transparency International Bureau (TIB) report (2001-2003) consecutively reported that hiding information is a common phenomenon in Bangladesh and organisations are no exception (Pulok and Ahmed, 2017). Corruption is somewhat a 'way of life' among masses of people of Bangladesh (Pulok and Ahmed, 2017:351). Based on the Transparency International Bureau (TIB) corruption perception index, Bangladesh is one of the most corrupt countries in the world (Chowdhury and Mahmood, 2012; Nurunnabi and Hossain 2012, Pulok and Ahmed, 2017).

However, according to Paksha (2010) there is a positive relationship between corruption and GDP growth rate during the rise of the market economy in Bangladesh. This continuous high GDP growth rate coupled with a high level of corruption makes Bangladesh an interesting country context to be studied. Moreover, Bangladesh is portrayed as a paradoxically strange country by several authors (Khan, 2015; Chowdhury and Mahmood, 2012; Sarkar, 2010). The reason behind such labelling is due to the country's repeated

changes in political situations, overpopulation, widespread poverty and corruption at every administrative and political level (Belal and Cooper, 2011). Once termed as a ‘bottomless basket’ by former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger (Rahman, 2018:1) it is now basket of hope for its abundant supply of human resources (Choudhury and Mahmood, 2012). Therefore, choosing Bangladesh as a research site is interesting due to its complexity compared to other South Asian countries.



Map 1: Map of South Asian region. (www.google.com)

1.5 Contribution to Knowledge

The literature review identifies a gap in HPWS studies relating to non-western contexts, especially South Asian countries and particularly Bangladesh. In many emerging countries, firms are deeply rooted in their traditional authoritarian patriarchal approaches to management practices (Demirbag et al., 2014). Thus, Bangladesh portrays an interesting context to explore how western HPWS impact employees' performance outcomes in multi-national companies (MNCs) in which traditional authoritarian-patriarchal standards remain

deeply embedded (Miah et al., 2001). This study contributes by confirming that western HPWS of these organisations positively influence employees' attitudes and performance through the lens of AMO theory in a non-western context.

It is evident that the majority of HPWS researchers have focused on the manufacturing sector, neglecting other sectors (Katou et al., 2014; Akhter et al., 2016; Mansour et al., 2014), in particular the service sector. This is because studies related to the manufacturing sector cannot be generalised with the service sector due to its diverse nature. It includes the intangibility of service practices and outcomes, the concurrent production and consumption of products, and customers' involvement in services delivery (Liao et al., 2009). As such, this study contributes by focusing on the service industry in a developing country like Bangladesh, which is growing at a fast pace.

Furthermore, most of the HPWS studies have been conducted using a quantitative approach, avoiding other possible results because there are not many qualitative findings to compare with. Scholars for example Beltran-Martin et al., (2008) suggested that research should be grounded in the 'next generation' of HRM and recommended further in-depth study to examine how and why HPWS impacts organisational performance. In order to advance prior research, the study used a mixed method research approach to analyse the data and responds to the suggestions, yielding a more in-depth knowledge of the underlying mechanisms through which HPWS impact employee outcome.

The conceptual model is a unique contribution to the existing literature because the study examines less studied moderating variables in a South Asian context. The model can be tested in any other part of the world in a similar context. The details of the contributions are discussed later in chapter seven.

1.6 Outline of the Thesis

Chapter 1 presents the importance of the study which leads to the research aim, main question and the objectives of the study to answer the research question. This chapter also provides a general outline of the thesis. The next chapter is devoted to provide background of the study which provides an overview of strategic HRM literature, the topic of HPWS and how it relates to employee performance in detail because of the centrality of this study.

Chapter 2 mainly presents the background of the study. The chapter gives an overview of the literature on high performance work system (HPWS), various terms and concepts of HPWS, definitions of HPWS stated by several researchers and underpinning the relationship between HPWS and performance outcome. In addition, the author discusses five selected HR practices the study which considers, recruitment and selection, training and development, performance appraisal, compensation and, communication and information sharing; these are as a bundle of HPWS dimensions and how it relates to performance outcome. The current research seeks to address the research gap in the context of South Asia. Therefore, the chapter ends by highlighting some research in the field of HPWS in the various South Asian countries.

Chapter 3 provides an extensive and critical literature review of HPWS and major theories that have dominated the HRM-employee outcome literature. The chapter also provides major studies that have examined the relationship between HPWS and employee attitudes such as job satisfaction, affective commitment and trust in management. Furthermore, as a developing country context, Bangladesh is classified as being collectivist in context with high power distance culture. Due to its complexity, HPWS and employee performance are likely to be influenced by cultural dimensions when compared with the western context. Therefore, the literature pertinent to this study is discussed. The chapter also explains the conceptual framework, which has been developed to understand the relationship between HPWS practices and employee performance outcome with other related variables. The hypotheses are developed and presented after a review of relevant literature on each topic.

Chapter 4 discusses the research methodology. The study used a mixed method approach therefore a justification of this method is provided. The chapter also discusses the ethical issues, research context and rationale for choosing the telecom service sector for the present research.

Chapter 5 presents the quantitative results from the questionnaire survey along with analyses and discussions. The findings of the quantitative phase of the study then help the researcher to develop the interview questions for the managers (key informants) to validate the research findings.

Chapter 6 presents qualitative results of the study collected by conducting interviews with the managers of the three selected organisations. The chapter also ends with the analysis of the findings and, discussions.

Chapter 7 discusses the summary of the findings from both quantitative and qualitative phases of the study. This chapter has provided an overall conclusion of the study commencing from the research question and how the study has addressed the set aim and research objectives.

Chapter 2

Background of the study

Introduction

An organisation's competitive advantage depends on its human capital and strategic human resource management relies on using the human resources within the organisation to achieve its objectives. This chapter presents the transition from human resource management (HRM) to strategic human resource management (SHRM) as well as the rationale for such a transition. The main objective of this chapter is to present the background of high performance work system (HPWS) and various terms of HPWS. An account of the definitions of HPWS as given by several researchers, underpins the relationship between HPWS and performance outcomes.

The chapter also discusses the challenges and contradictions of the universality of the HPWS concept. Furthermore, the author discusses five selected HR practices that the present study considers; recruitment and selection, training and development, performance appraisal, compensation and communication and information sharing. These are addressed as a bundle of HPWS dimensions and how this relates to performance outcomes. The relationship between HPWS and performance remains unanswered due to the black box problem as described in detail in Section 2.3.5. The current research seeks to address the research gap in the context of South Asia. The chapter ends by highlighting some research in the field of HPWS in the various South Asian countries.

2.1 Human resource management (HRM)

It is not altogether straightforward to define the HRM concept, as to a great degree, this depends on an individual's social constructions or frame of reference. The debate has given rise to multiple viewpoints as to whether or not meaning can be given to HRM as a theory for the management of people or as a Map Model (Storey, 2007). In any case, the term has been

simplified as a process of strategically managing the relationships within employment. Strategic management will look at the intrinsic human capital of an organisation with more value than other external and replaceable resources such as the technological, natural and economic resources (Ulrich et al., 2013). Murphy (2002) therefore explains that HRM is a group of systematic activities and strategies which focuses on successfully managing employees in the organisation to achieve organisational objectives and goals.

Armstrong (2011) defines the term HRM in a way wherein the individual and collective people of the organisation can be managed systematically and rationally so that a complete contribution towards the organisational goals and achievements can be expected. Torrington et al. (2014) found personnel administration to be mostly an employee-centric organisation rather than function-centric organisation: most of what it accounted for were core HR functions such as the employment, development, motivation and evaluation of the employees'. But the HR itself has expanded its features from its staff-centric organisation to a function-centric organisation in the past decade (Torrington et al., 2014). By the 1980s organisations came up with the idea that the HR in their organisations could use their power to obtain competitive advantage, hereby conceptualising a new term known as the 'strategic HRM' (SHRM). According to Atsanga (2013), this new concept took the human capital of an organisation into a higher regard than simply valuing the factors that were extrinsic to an organisation and very easily replaceable. These factors might have included imitable resources or technology, economy and nature. Functions of the HRM are critical and significant in the improvement of human capital and achievement of the organisational objective, subsequently leading to the attainment of competitive advantage (Marler and Parry, 2016).

2.2 Strategic human resource management (SHRM)

Strategic human resource management (SHRM) centres on the general 'HR strategies adopted by business divisions and organisations' (Boxall and Macky, 2007:3). According to

Armstrong (2011), SHRM aims to manage people who deal with how organisational goals will be achieved through its human resources, by integrating HR strategies, policies and practices of the organisation. Delery and Doty (1996) opined that SHRM focuses on issues that relate HRM to the business goal, designing high performance work system (HPWS), and create value through good people management in an attempt to gain sustained competitive advantage. The business strategy is comprised of multiple strategies covering the various 'functional silos' of business: marketing, finance, operations and human resources (Boxall and Purcell, 2003:35). Over the past three decades, SHRM researchers have suggested that using a mix or bundles of HR practices consistently contributes to organisations' performance (Messersmith et al., 2011; Mao et al., 2013; El-Ghalayani, 2016). These bundles of HR practices have been referred to as high performance work systems (HPWS), which originated from the strategic human resource management (El-Ghalayani, 2016).

Human resource department in an organisation carries out multiple people oriented activities, such as recruitment and selection, training and development, performance appraisal and compensation and reward mechanism (Chang et al., 2016). Therefore, HR departments play a key role in achieving organisational goals by involving employees in strategy formulation because the implementation of strategy necessitates a sound coordination of human resources (Barney and Wright, 1998). This is why employees with challenging responsibilities and creativity to perform well, higher flexibility, innovation and a good relationship with management, provide competitive advantage to the organisation (Barney and Wright, 1998; Jackson et al., 2003; Akhter et al., 2008). The base of SHRM is derived from resource-based view of organisations. (Ghafoor and Qureshi, 2013; Barney, 1991). According to resource-based view, the bundle of HR practices or HPWS adoption is to create competitive advantage when organisations invest in their human capital and in turn the human capital's distinct capabilities lead to superior organisational performance (Barney, 1991; Lawler, 1992; Khandaker and Sharma, 2005; Patel and Conklin, 2012). The extensive amount

of academic literature and attention given to managerial practices prove that the sector of strategic human resource management (SHRM) has been subjected to an immense global interest in the previous years (Becker and Huselid, 2006).

One of the essential principles of the study of SHRM is that the effect of HR practices on organisations as well as individuals is understood clearly when examining a bundle, configuration, cluster or system of HR practices (Lepak et al., 2006). Upon analysing the SHRM literature, the findings suggest that this continually transforming empirical research of SHRM sector revolves around the connection between competitive advantage and HPWS; this is a collection of HR practices that is meant to aid employees with more skills, information and motivation to perform better at work (Guthrie et al., 2009). According to Bae and Lawler (2000) HR systems should be comprised of a bundle of practices rather than only focused on individual HR practices. HPWS builds on the notion that individual HR practices can create a positive impact on performance. Moreover, integrating these practices with each other will be even more successful. This argument is also supported by MacDuffie (1995); Takeuchi et al., (2007) and Combs et al., (2006) among others.

Even though there is positive evidence of the connection, it can be seen from the literature review that HPWS practices are still used insufficiently (Takeuchi et al., 2007; Sun et al., 2007). It can also be noted that although there is a global appreciation and research of the connection between HPWS and performance, countries that are still developing have had a negligible number of studies conducted. The need for more research on HPWS in the South Asian context has been identified by several scholars (Budhwar and Sparrow, 2002; Miah and Kitamura, 2005; Miah and Hossain, 2014). Therefore, it can be expected that this current study will develop the knowledge base of developing countries regarding HPWS, which can in turn extend the SHRM literature.

2.3.1 What is high performance work system (HPWS)?

The basic line of argument or theory that underlies most of the HRM studies within the management literature proposes that the development of the most valuable asset of an organisation, i.e. its people, can ensure the achievement and sustainability of its organisational performance (Becker and Huselid, 2006; Souchi and Liao, 2015). The studies have categorised a notion of 'best practices' otherwise known as high performance work system (HPWS) (Appelbaum et al., 2000). HPWS is a set of best practices of HRM that creates a structure together in order to boost employee performance, employee attitude and work structure designed to enhance organisational performance (Appelbaum et al., 2000; Boxall, 2012; El-Ghalayini, 2016). The main idea behind HPWS is to create a synergy with the combination of these practices that can have a positive impact on organisational performance through a flexible work environment. This then induces participative behavior in employees and builds a free flow of communication between the managers and the employees (Appelbaum et al., 2000). Consequently, this bundle of HRM practices positively impacts the selection, development, retention and motivation of the employees so that their enhanced work activities may lead to a synergistic and systematic effect on the organisational performance (Boxall, 2012).

The pioneering work by Huselid (1995), on 'The Impact of Human Resource Management Practices on Turnover Productivity, and Corporate Financial Performance,' traces the origin of such concepts of the management's focus on human resources through HPWS. During this work, the HR management from 968 publicly held organisations of the United States were surveyed by (Huselid, 1995). A positive linkage was found between individual employee performance and the implementation of HPWS through his findings. The findings soon became so popular that a number of other researchers such as Huselid (1995), attempted to find similar results on the relationship between the implementation of HPWS and its impacts on organisational performance. According to Paauwe (2009), this

relationship between HPWS and organisational performance has been scrutinized from the points of view of sociology, industrial relations, economics, organisational behavior and organisational psychology by putting a significant amount of focus on employee skills, behaviors and attitude. The most comprehensive of the initial research studies on HPWS was conducted by MacDuffie (1995). He put forward the argument that the practices of HRM do not function by themselves, but rather, the perfect combination of interrelated, consistent practices that has the ability to transform the relationship between managers and employees (MacDuffie, 1995). Appelbaum (2000) conducted a similar study with her colleagues by investigating steel, apparel and imaging industries of the US regarding the impacts of HPWS. The study found that HPWS has positive influences on employee attitudinal outcomes such as organisational commitment, trust, job satisfaction and lower job burnout.

Organisations that use a high performance work system (HPWS) practice a distinctive managerial approach that enables high performance through people. Instead of exercising employee control, the idea behind HPWS organisation is to create an organisation based on employee involvement and empowerment (Tomer, 2001; Jiang and Liu, 2015). As Lawler (1992:3) stated, in HPWS organisation, employees ‘feel responsible for and involved in its success’. Research indicates that a particular set of managerial practices is varied across organisations. For this reason, different HRM research has highlighted features and management practices that also are different in describing HPWS practices.

The literature that explores the link between an organisation’s performance and the implementation of HPWS is continuously growing in the worldwide (Posthuma et al., 2013; Shin and Konrad, 2017; Rasool and Shah, 2015; Obeidat et al., 2016). Researchers such as Rasool and Shah (2015) search for the core mechanisms between organisational performance and HPWS by using a total strategic resource approach model that examines the various mediating and moderating variables as related to the HPWS – organisational performance relationship. The results indicated that the HPWS has a significant positive effect on firm

performance. Furthermore, Shin and Konrad (2017) investigated the underlying relations between HPWS and performance using a large longitudinal data set with three time points. Results showed that past HPWS positively contributes to later productivity of organisational performance. Intriguingly, a recent study conducted by Obeidat et al., (2016) tested HPWS and organisational performance through a model of multiple dimensions in the financial and manufacturing sectors in the middle-eastern context. The results are supportive of the link between HPWS and organisational performance; they also confirm the utility of the AMO theory for theorizing HPWS and its effects on organisational performance. Therefore, the connection between HPWS and organisational performance is evident, both theoretically and empirically in SHRM literature. Due to increasing acceptance of HPWS and its positive impact on employees' and organisational performance has given rise to a variety of terms and definitions. Accordingly, the following sections discuss the origin of the concept, performance, and the relationship between HPWS and performance.

2.3.2 Terms of high performance work system (HPWS)

The term high performance work systems (HPWS) is used interchangeably as 'high performance work practices' (Combs et al., 2006; Sung and Ashton, 2005; Karatepe, 2013). In other instances, the term has also been known as 'high-commitment work practices' (Iverson and Zatzick, 2007) or 'high-involvement management' (Lawler, 1986). Others have considered the term as 'high performance organisations' (Lawler et al., 1998; Ashton and Sung, 2002) or 'high involvement work practices' (Wood et al., 2001). A meta-analysis of 92 studies linking HPWS with organisational performance indicates a stronger correlation when HPWS is viewed as a system rather than individual practices (Combs et al., 2006). However, these terms refer to the same general phenomenon, making it difficult to define HPWS universally. In addition, researchers found that even though different naming preferences are used interchangeably, the phenomena of interest remain the same; this reflects the entirety of the HR system and not the HR practices only (Evans and Davis, 2005, Guthrie et al., 2009).

There is substantial overlap between these terms and thus this study adheres to the general term of high performance work system (HPWS) when referring to a consistent HR practice of an organisation to achieve employee performance.

Table 2.1 HPWS terms used by various researchers

Terms	Author (s)
High–Commitment Management	Arthur, (1994)
HR Practice Configurations	Choi, (2014) Delery, (1996)
High-Performance HR Practices	Sun et al., (2007) Kehoe and Wright, (2013)
High-Commitment Human Resources Management Practices (HCHRM)	Macky and Boxall, (2007) Rubel et al., (2018)
Innovative HRM Practices	Agarwala; (2003)
HRM Best Practices	Coaker; (2011)
High-Performance Work Organisation	Wood and De Menezes, (2011) Felstead and Gallie, (2004)
High-Commitment Management	Wood, (1999) Baird, (2002)
High-Performance Work practices	Tregaskis et al., (2013)
High-involvement management	Lawler, 1986
High-performance work system	Ananthram et al., (2018)

2.3.3 Definitions of high performance work system (HPWS)

The problem of defining HPWS has been widely recognised by researchers (Lawler et al., 2011). Lepak et al. (2006) view HPWS as the combination of HR practices that enhances employee motivation, abilities and involvement. In short, they view these practices as complementary features leading to a greater organisational performance. The use of HPWS in organisations demands a substantial investment in their human capital in order to make the employees well trained and empowered to perform better in their jobs (Becker and Huselid, 1998). HPWS is not a new phenomenon given its application in different organisations. Nevertheless, according to Barnes (2001), the concept of HPWS has existed for quite some

time and stems from the 20th century US manufacturing. During this time, the American manufacturing industry became aware of the global competition and needed to rethink how to cope in this new situation. The concepts that were born in these times have eventually become key features of HPWS. However, the definition of HPWS developed in the USA has been modified at a later stage for application in other studies. As Parks (1995) stated, the definition of HPWS varies between companies, writers, academic disciplines, production plants and between countries.

High performance work system (HPWS) as HR systems embody crucial idea for the work place and its environment (Boxall and Macky, 2009; Evans and Davis, 2005). High performance work system (HPWS) and high performance working can be explained in many ways. As regards to the origins and implementation, a variety of explanations are given by researchers (Takeuchi et. al., 2007; Datta et al., 2005; Guthrie et al., 2009). Takeuchi et. al. (2007) for example presents a definition that HPWS is as ‘a group of separate but interconnected human resources (HR) practices designed to enhance employees’ skills and effort.’ Another widely popular explanation defines the system of HR practices as ‘designed to enhance employee’s skills, commitment and productivity in such a way that employees become a source of competitive advantage’ (Datta et al., 2005:135). Another researcher Tomer (2001:64) claims that to achieve ‘high performance through people’ is the main intention of HPWS. Sun et al. (2007) further argue that HPWS chooses single HR practices and integrates them into a stronger combination that impacts organisational performance jointly. (See Table 2.2 for various HPWS definitions).

Table 2.2: Definitions of HPWS by SHRM Scholars

Author(s)	Year	Definitions
Huselid	1995: 635	HPWS is designed to ‘improve knowledge, skills and, abilities of a firm’s current and potential employees, increase their motivation, reduces hiarking and enhance retention of quality employees while encouraging nonperformers to leave the firm’.
Becker and Huselid	1998:55	HPWS as: ‘an internally consistent and coherent HRM system that is focused on solving Operational problems and implementing the firm’s competitive strategy’.
Datta,et al.,	2005:135	HPWS as asset of HR practices ‘designed to enhance employee’s skills, commitment and productivity in such a way that employees become a source of competitive advantage’.
Evans and Davis,	2005:759	HPWS as a combined set of HRM practices that are internally consistent (alignment among HRM practices) and externally consistent (alignment with firm strategy).
Tsai,	2006:1513	The term ‘HPWS sometimes used as a synonym for involvement or high commitment management and has been seen to represent our alternative to hierarchical, mass production forms of work organisation’.
Takeuchi et al.,	2007:1069	HPWS is ‘a group of separate but interconnected human resource (HR) practices designed to enhance employee’s skills and effort’.
Farndale et al.,	2011:40	HCWS can be described as a fundamental requirement to achieve employee outcomes such as job satisfaction, lower absenteeism and higher organisational citizenship behaviour and employees who are willing to ‘go extra mile’.
Messersmith et al;	2011:1107	HPWS is a ‘strong systems comprising internally coherent practices that send reinforcing messages and cues to employees’.
Patel, Messersmith and Lepak	2013:1421	HPWS is ‘a system of horizontally and vertically aligned employment practices designed to affect both the ability and the motivation of employees’.
Rabl et al.	2014:3	HPWS is ‘human resource (HR) practices designed to increase business performance by enhancing employee ability, motivation and opportunity to contribute (AMO)’
Van de Voorde and Beijer	2015:63	HPWS is ‘a group of separate but interconnected HR practices designed to enhance employee and firm performance through enhancing employee skills, motivation and opportunity to contribute’.
Lee and Lee	2015:2225	HPWSs refers to ‘a group of separate but interconnected HR practices, including strict selective staffing, extensive training and development, incentivized compensation, and performance-based appraisal, all of which are designed to enhance employees’ attitudes, motivation and opportunities to contribute, thereby improving organisational performance’.

2.3.4 Challenges and inconsistencies of defining HPWS

The approach taken towards HRM faces critical challenges and criticism even though the relationship between HPWS and organisational performance has been supported by a growing number of empirical studies. A quick inspection of the research regarding HRM reveals how major conflicts remain regarding high performance work system. Scholars such as Boselie et al., (2005) and Guest (2001) question the efficiency of these systems and inquire if and how they may lead to the development and achievement of overall organisational performance. On the other hand, scholars such as Stanton and Manning (2013) and Macky and Boxall (2007) oppose by asking whether such practices can have a reverse effect and result in intensified work load, pressure and stress. However, there is no consensus on the correct proportion of HRM practices for HPWS. After analysing approximately 104 articles of the past decade, Boselie et al., (2005) remark through the title of an article ‘Commonalities and contradictions in HRM and performance research’ with the argument that there is no general agreement on the correct HRM activities for proper employee management. A range of studies have found varied bundles of HPWS practices to be beneficial but a consensus on a fixed list is yet to be found. Different scholars are therefore making various methodological and theoretical proposals in order to find a way out of these inconsistencies of the infrastructure and liberate HPWS of any contradictions.

However, a study by Posthuma et al. (2013) shows that 61 HR practices can be listed from academic sources dated between 1992 to 2011. Having been mentioned 2042 times, it is clear that with respect to HR practices, different researchers preferred diverse practices and a number of them were used many times or more than the others. This presents the argument that the preference of HR practices varies across context and thus a consensus on the perfect configuration cannot be decided upon or fixed (Sun et al., 2007; Gittell et al., 2008; Shih et al., 2013; Karatepe and Vatankhah, 2014). Nevertheless, certain HR practices as components of HPWS were found more often and implemented in all the organisations under study. These

are recruitment and selection, training and development, performance appraisal, compensation and benefits. Still, it is common to find a variety of different amalgamations resulting from diverse organisational goals, a variety of strategic approach and cultural context. However, it can be argued that irrespective of such a variety, the main approaches of high performance focus on extending the abilities, motivation and opportunities of the employees (Combs et al., 2006; Shih et al., 2006; Sun et al., 2007; Boselie, 2010; Rabl et al., 2014) to perform behaviours consistent with organisational goals (Kehoe and Wright, 2013).

Even though the precise HR practices included in HPWS differ across studies, similarities can be found as any high-performance approach is centred on advancing workforce ability, motivation, and opportunity (see Applebaum et al., 2000; Combs et al., 2006). In line with some scholars (Evans and Davis, 2005; Guthrie et al., 2009; Kang and Snell, 2009; Fu, 2013), the present study reflects five HR practices to signify the main areas of HPWS. Building on prior studies, the researcher proposed the AMO model that suggests specific HR practices which enhance the three main components of the model. In addition, other researchers suggested the appropriateness of conceptualising HPWS into the AMO frameworks by grouping HR practices, thus the sum total of ability, motivation and opportunity enhancing practices (Applebaum et al; 2000; Claudia, 2015; Jiang et al., 2012; Bos-Nehles et al., 2013). As such the present study selected recruitment and selection, training and development practices as ability enhancing practices. For example, training and development practices improve employees' skills and abilities to perform well in their jobs while recruitment and selection attract and identify employees who conform to the organisation's profile (Bos-Nehles et al., 2013; Schimansky, 2014). Motivation enhancing practices are related to performance appraisal and compensation. In HRM studies, motivation enhancing practices promote employees' initiatives at work and deliver better performance (Martin-Garcia and Tomas, 2016). In relation to opportunity enhancing practices, communication and information sharing in the organisation offer prospects for dialogues across organisational

hierarchies, create chances to share knowledge among colleagues and promote employee involvement in the decision making process (Appelbaum et al., 2000; Martin-Garcia and Tomas, 2016). Hence the current research proposes HPWS are made up of five dimensions, namely: recruitment and selection, training and development, performance appraisal, compensation, and communication and information sharing. These are planned to boost employees' ability, motivation and opportunities to lead to a higher level of performance. Details of these individual HR practices are discussed below (see also Table 2.4).

a) Recruitment and Selection.

According to Bloise (2007:107) recruitment is about 'the different activities of attracting applicants to an organisation'. While selection 'consists of sifting through the pool of applicants and making decisions about their appropriateness' (Bloisi, 2007: 107). To put it simply, recruitment and selection is all about attracting possible candidates and selecting individuals who have the relevant qualifications for available jobs. Bratton and Gold (2012) stated that two interconnected processes give rise to recruitment and selection because recruitment is the method through which capable applicants for a certain job are collected in a pool. Selection is the method of choosing the most capable of the pool through specific instruments considering the organisational goals and legal requirements. Being the entry point for most organisations, researchers (Bos-Nehles et al., 2013; Schimansky, 2014) claimed that the process of recruitment and selection is one of the important HR practices in HPWS dimension.

Recruitment and selection can be categorised in three steps by first defining the recruitment, attracting candidates and finally selecting the candidates (Armstrong, 2009). Tools and techniques used during these processes are interview assessments, chequing curriculum vitae, and work references and so on. Boella and Turners (2005) specify that usually the process begins with producing the specific requirements on the basis of the job description and ends with appointing the most candidate. Hughes (2002) demonstrates that

several other sub-stages occur during this process as the list of candidates is narrowed down to meet the job requirements, and unsuitable candidates are gotten rid of in the process. The best suited, most committed and best fit with the organisational agenda may not be guaranteed through the sole reliance on an interview by the manager. Vencatachellum and Mathurivin (2010) suggest alternative methods such as involving peers, interviewing in a team, role playing and work simulation help to ideally identify the most appropriate candidates.

Organisational success depends on choosing the right candidate for the right job. While recruiting such a candidate for a particular job, the organisation not only promotes individual employee success in terms of employee job satisfaction but also the organisation benefits in terms of an increase in productivity or superior quality of services (Boselie, 2010). Incompetent candidates for the job may negatively influence performance, while a vigorous selection and recruitment policy which takes candidates' personal traits and long term commitment potential into consideration, can find the suitable candidate for the organisation (Delaney and Huselid, 1996).

Among all the functions of HRM, recruitment and selection is considered to be one of the major ones. It helps management to attract and identify the right people to build an improved workforce and thus impact organisational performance (Rehman, 2012). The recruitment and selection process are considered vital to deciding upon the candidates who get the employment offer (Aycan, 2005; Moideenkutty et al., 2011). This is because recruitment and selection are conducted in a way that the persons who are best fit can be found for the right jobs of an organisation. Further to this, Abdullah et al., (2011) opined that identifying this set of employees can reduce the cost of their training and development. Dessler (2007) argued that if the wrong employees are selected then organisational performance is significantly hampered. Recruitment and selection practices aim to improve the 'person work fit' between the employees and the organisation, developing teamwork and team spirit and hence, create a better environment at work (Chadrakumara and Sparrow, 2004;

Tzafrir, 2005). Empirical evidence suggests that well planned recruitment and selection policies resulted in improved organisational productivity and helped to gain greater employee performance (Katou and Budhwar, 2007; Bos-Nehles et al., 2013; Schimansky, 2014).

Advertisements in daily newspapers, network bulletins, HR banks and posters are some of the methods of formal recruitment while having personal connections or being introduced through staff members are means of informal recruitment (Pao-Long and Wei-Ling, 2002). The variety of recruitment processes and their effectiveness has been a research topic for over fifty years now. The effectiveness of the process has mainly been evaluated by examining job survival rates as well as job performance. Ferris et al. (2002) added that effective recruitment has a positive impact on the effectiveness of the organisation itself. Several researchers have agreed that high organisational performance and competitive advantage can be achieved through recruiting effectively. (Zottoli and Wanous, 2000; Rehman, 2012; Pao-Long and Wei-Ling, 2002).

However, according to Aycan (2005), recruitment and selection methods are usually bound by culture and thus may vary widely from one culture to another. In the United States, criteria for selection are assumed relevant for both the job and a prediction of future performance. North Americans prefer educational history, experience, cognitive skills and personality traits as their general selection criteria (Aycan, 2005). In the cross-cultural context, the amount of research on how appropriate these selection criteria are is scarce. There have been a few studies to suggest that the criteria for selection is rather interpersonal and not individualistic. In Japan, candidates are selected on consideration of their personality and temperament (Evans, 1993) and by way of the opinions of the team members (Huo and Glinow, 1995). Whereas Islamic Arab countries prefer candidates who are agreeable, trustworthy and have good interpersonal relations. Indians favour those who belong to a social group or status as the manager (Sinha, 1995). On the other hand, Latin Americans prefer those who have a positive worldview and attitude towards family. However, Bjorkman and

Lu (1999), emphasized that organisations also stress over the recruitment of people who are related to officers of influence. Based on the above empirical evidence, recruitment and selection may be positioned as one of the most important components of HPWS practices which are most likely to predict employee performance.

b) Training and development.

According to Chris (2001:82), 'training is a process through which the skills, talent and knowledge of an employee are enhanced'. The training and development terms are often used interchangeably. However, they can be separated from each other. Training is for particular job responsibilities while development goes beyond specific development which does not only improve job specific skills but also enhances employees' overall mental growth and personality (Chris, 2011; Raja et al., 2011).

HRM studies feature employee training and development as one of an organisation's most vital functions. A developed employee performance affects the development of the organisation positively, helping the organisation grow and, affecting employee performance positively (Antonacopoulou, 2000). It has been suggested that proper investment in training of the right kind of employees increases their strengths and skills while developing their performance (Sultana et al., 2012). Apart from playing a major role in employee performance, the continuously changing market, organisational structures and the radical innovations in technology makes training and development necessary for the employee to cope with these changes.

According to Raja et al. (2011), development programmes are aimed at benefitting employees. The final impact is made on the organisation itself. Abang et al. (2009) elaborated that to have the most powerful impact, training needs to be included in the HPWS bundle with other appropriate HRM practices based on empirical research. There are many other HR practices in the human resource management field which can together make the impacts on training much more effective (Aguinis and Kraiger, 2009). As stated by Aguinis and Kraiger, (2009), this should focus more on theory-based learning in the case of the training design by

allowing and encouraging the trainees themselves to select and arrange the content for training. This makes certain that they put effort into acquiring new skills and provides these trainees with incentives to make mistakes together as a team so they can learn from their errors. Lastly, it is encouraged that the trainees be given adaptive guidance in terms of training delivery, as it can be seen that the benefits of using technology may be heightened this way (Aguinis and Kraiger, 2009).

Employees' performance can be enhanced by providing them with extensive training and development activities (Tsai, 2006). Training and development practices may positively influence employee performance in two ways. Firstly, these activities improve employees' skills, knowledge, abilities and motivation with regards to their job responsibilities. Secondly, training and development positively influence employee job satisfaction in workplaces. Previous research has indicated that training and development programmes in an organisation have positive effects on employee performance irrespective of business types, or sectors of influence on external environment (Tsai, 2006). For example, Gunu et al. (2013) surveyed 395 respondents from five financial institutions to find out whether employees' training and development practices influence work efficiency in the organisation. The results indicated that training and development have a positive influence on organisational performance. The study recommended that employees who participated in the training programmes should be rewarded to stay motivated to learn, which in turn benefits the organisation itself (Raja et al., 2011). There are mainly two types of training namely: on-the-job and off-the-job training. On-the-job training involves teaching or mentoring by trainers, colleagues or line-managers to help employees to perform their job duties and train them with proper job specific skills (Chris, 2011). Whereas, off-the-job training involves role playing, discussion, lectures, distance learning and workshops arranged by external training centres, the training department of the organisation, training consultants or guest speakers (Armstrong, 2011).

It is considered that the training of employees is the most vital investment used in order to increase their skills and knowledge with simultaneous improvement of attitudes and behaviours (Bulut and Culha, 2010). Employees are the fundamental source of a sustainable

competitive advantage for the organisation (Tsai, 2006). Aryee et al. (2012) therefore claims that, this practice has been used widely by the contemporary researchers. According to Posthuma et al. (2013) training programmes provide the proper schooling and preparation for the employees so that they are equipped with the set of skills and competencies required for their jobs. Which is why, when provided with trainings and development programmes, employees tend to seize every chance to improve their capabilities (Selden et al., 2013). This is the reason employers tend to look for and rely on organisations that promote their training programmes showing how much they value their employees' contributions and are likely to invest in them by improving their skills set, knowledge and motivation (Selden et al., 2013).

In order to have successful results from training programmes, certain measures should be taken care of during the implementation of the entire process. The measures include analysis of the trainees' needs prior to the training itself, based on which an adequate training plan can be designed and implemented, and finally the evaluation of the trainees (Sole and Mirabet, 1997). According to researchers Tsang (1994) and Wilkins (2001), cultures that emphasize heavily on the performance and quality of the workforce usually have a huge budget allocated for training and development programmes. Aycan et al. (2000) demonstrate that cultures with a high power distance undermine the necessity of training and development programmes by assuming that employees are, in nature, incapable of improving their capabilities and skills. Furthermore, the ways through which training needs are determined is a case of concern. In low power distance cultures, training needs are found through the performance outcomes of the individual employee. In the context of high power distance which projects low performance, the decisive factors of the participants are not based on job performance but other criteria. Sinha (1995) elaborates on this issue by suggesting that employees who maintain a good relationship with higher management are usually selected as candidates for lucrative training programmes such as overseas training as a reward for their loyalty. However, based on the discussion, it is apparent that training and development enhances employee abilities, skills and knowledge thereby augmenting overall work performance.

c) Performance Appraisal.

Performance appraisal refers to organisations' systematic process, which facilitates the classification of individual performance levels and skill gaps (Locke and Latham, 1990; Abu-Doleh and Weir, 2007). Performance appraisals have turned out to be one of the vital components of organisational success in strategic HRM practices. This is important because if performance appraisal is administered effectively in an organisation then organisational membership is developed which is of extreme importance to white-collar executives (Selden et al., 2013). The same authors also stated that as performance appraisals are implemented in an organisation, their managers express their views by highlighting employees' strengths and weaknesses and adjust them via training initiatives (Selden et al., 2013).

Appraisals are usually counter-signed by both the management and the employees. They are comprised of the individual employee's performance as observed and evaluated objectively in order to list possible measures for further improvement (Osman et al., 2011). According to Wilson and Western (2000), the term generally refers to a yearly interview between the employees and management where they discuss the previous year, and compile a list of actions that can develop the individual's performance.

According to the literature review of many researchers (Khan, 2010; Quresh et al., 2010; Abdullah et al., 2011; Pao-Long and Wei-Ling, 2002), there is a significant connection between the performance of an organisation and its performance appraisals. For example, Khan (2010) raised the argument that complementary HR practices such as compensation or training programmes develop performance appraisals even further in order to positively impact productivity. When an organisation manages the performance of their workforce, it inevitably morphs into a central component of the organisation reflecting on how the employees are managed. Osman et al. (2011) predicts that performance appraisals that are prejudiced and ineffective can lead to a deficit in the employees' self-esteem, work productivity and enthusiasm in the job which can result an undesirable problem for the

organisation. Therefore, for a performance appraisal to be effective, it needs to be structured in a way that the whole process can function at its most favourable level of performance (Giles et al., 1997).

It is evident that talent management policies emphasise the importance of ensuring that employees are capable of utilising their talents effectively in their work performance (Bratton and Gold, 2012). Talent management refers to the talented and high potential employees and managing them properly. Talented employees are required to have ongoing innovative ideas for sustained competitive advantage. In fact, the knowledge economy is expanding in the face of globalisation, hence the value of talented employees will continue to be recognized by the organisation. Therefore, performance appraisal plays an important role in identifying and retaining talented employees in an organisation. Furthermore, effective performance appraisal can result in an increased level of employee performance (Bratton and Gold, 2012).

Performance appraisal should be viewed as a supportive employee development process rather than a process to control employees. It is the process where managers can make judgements about employees' performance that can guide the managers to make decisions about their values, contributions, potential, and worth. This also strengthens the relationship between manager and employees. Based on employees' performance appraisal, managers' decisions can be interpreted by feedback. Timely feedback is necessary and informative for a perception of fairness (Bratton and Gold, 2012).

As stated by Mayer and Davis (1999:125), a fair appraisal system that clearly reflects the employee's performance, increases and enhances trust for those who are responsible for the appraisal. In this regard, Mayer and Davis (1999) and Fey et al. (1999) stated that performance appraisal systems provide employees with feedback that helps employees to enhance their performance and therefore create a positive impact on employees' skills and abilities. Consistent with Cummings (1983), the former study suggests that performance appraisals help increase trust for the organisation employees' work for. However, communicating

feedback to the employees is a major aspect in some cultural contexts. The manner in which feedback is given or received depends on this context. In cultures oriented to high power distance, employees are unenthusiastic and hesitant to seek feedback. Generally, the superiors initiate the process for demonstrating their wisdom and expertise (Aycan, 2005). High power distance cultures discourage any appeal process since it is assumed that it contradicts authority (Fletcher and Perry, 2001). According to the same writers' feedback in high power distance-oriented cultures is indirect, restrained and private. Elenkov (1998) demonstrates that direct and confrontational feedback is unusual. In response to the above suggestions, combining performance appraisal with other relevant HR practices will improve employee skills, abilities and motivation which in turn influence employee commitment and performance.

d) Compensation.

Employee compensation is defined by Dessler, (2007: 390) as 'all forms of pay or rewards going to employees and arising from their employment'. Compensation refers to outcomes of services that the employee receives from his/her organisation. Compensation includes wages, bonuses, (e.g. a performance bonus), benefits (e.g. a medical or retirement plan), recognition and praise (Barr, 1998). The writer claims that a compensation system can contribute to the organisations' success in three ways. Firstly, it can help to attract good employees to the organisation; secondly, a good compensation system can retain the best performers and thirdly, it can motivate employees to perform well in their job. It is evident that the skilled employees are less likely to perform well in the workplace if they are not motivated to perform (Tsai, 2006). Therefore, organisations can provide performance related compensation to enhance employee motivation (Delaney and Huselid, 1996). Vrooms' expectancy theory (Fey and Bijorkman, 2001; Guest, 2002) suggests that employees are motivated to perform well when they perceive that there is a positive link between their performance and the reward they get.

Research indicates that the reward system has to be appropriate for the employees in order to value them; it must also be equitable to match their capabilities and contribution to the organisation itself. For example, studies conducted by Giorgio and Arman (2008), Danish and Usman (2010), Khan (2010), Quresh et al. (2010), and Katou and Budhwar (2006), claim that the compensation an organisation offers coincides with an interconnecting relationship with the performance of both the individual employee and the overall organisation. Mayson and Barret (2006) found that offering a competitive compensation like salary and reward, is connected with the organisation's ability of attracting, motivating and retaining its human capital and leads to overall organisational performance, output and growth. In the case of salespeople, the reward system has a considerable impact on both the individual performance and the effectiveness of the organisation. For this reason, researchers such as Chenevert and Tremblay (2011) opined that many organisations have attempted to locate and exemplify new and innovative techniques of compensation. This is because of its direct link to the improvement of organisational performance in a competitive business environment.

One of the major practices of the HR is to assess and reward employees through compensation based on their job performance. There have been several research studies (Cardon and Stevens, 2004; Abang et al., 2009) to prove that there is a positive connection between the individual performance of the employee and compensation based on performance. Interestingly, this relationship is evident in the context of developing countries. Abang et al. (2009) demonstrate that the reason behind this could be due to the fact that workers in developing countries are not paid as much as the workers in developed countries. Therefore, the HR in developing countries tends to be more concerned with their practices in order to increase what they earn. The positive relationship between a performance-based reward system and the overall organisational performance has also been proven through empirical studies. It has been identified that the performance of the workforce and their attitude towards fulfilling commitments can be encouraged through incentives of an

organisation; these may utilize HR features such as performance related compensation and promotion based on merit (Uen and Chien, 2004).

However, the cultural context can play a considerably moderating role in the case of compensation and reward policies of an organisation. Contrary to cultures with low power distance and thus a high performance, compensation is determined through a prejudiced evaluation by the managers as they assume the right to be able to differentiate and assign salary scales even for employees who are recruited for the same position in cultures with a high power distance (Mendonca and Kanungo, 1994). According to Aycan (2005), the possibility of rewards based on performance is lower in cultures with high power distance. Apart from that, in these cultures, the allocation of rewards depends on factors such as seniority or having a good relationship with the superiors, and not on performance of the individual (Leung, 1997).

Compensation can be considered as one of the most important HR practices in dimensions of HPWS for employees, as it is the driving force behind the employment of people. Absar et al., (2012) argued that merit based compensation practices has a positive impact on organisational performance. Similarly, Rima and Islam (2013) assert that a standardized compensation system in the service industry in Bangladesh is one of the most used tools by HR in order to ensure motivation for employees. In support of this argument, HPWS that include compensation systems have made significant and positive impacts on employees' performance (Liao et al., 2009). There is evidence to prove that performance based compensation has long been considered a key part of HPWS (Demirbag et al., 2014). Martin–Garcia and Tomas (2014) further argued that performance-based compensation is the most general motivation enhancing practice. Thus, a proper implementation of compensation systems can definitely increase individual employees' motivation to perform well and meet their job requirements. This is further supported by other empirical research that performance based compensation and employee outcome are positively correlated (Lawler, 1981; Cardon

and Stevens, 2004; Fey et al., 2009). Based on the empirical evidence above, the author argues that a compensation system practice is a vital component of HPWS dimensions that impacts the motivation of employees, which in turn impacts employee performance.

e) Communication and information sharing.

Open communication between employees and managers is helpful to facilitate information sharing with regards to business strategy, performance and objectives of an organisation. Communication promotes quick transmission of new information and innovative opinions about any new information and knowledge shared by individuals which keeps positive attitudes among employees' (Jiang and Liu, 2015). Sharing information on both the individual and an organisational level promotes organisational openness. As such, it enhances employee trust and loyalty to the organisation, which results in employee motivation and co-operative behaviors (Abdullah et al., 2011). Similarly, Demirbag et al., (2014) argued that effective internal communication results in higher level of trust between management and employees, which in turn facilitates team working through providing employees with necessary information that improves their performance. Aycan et al. (2005) opined that in cases where performance data is communicated on a regular basis, employees have been observed to improve their performance. Posthuma et al. (2013) established that this practice mainly relates to the methods and networks of communication where exchange of information takes place. This is why Selden et al., (2013) also considered that this practice works positively in order to improve the new worker's impression of the organisational membership, resulting in a visible decrease in turnover rates. Therefore, a variety of channels such as group meetings, websites or social media chat groups of the organisation, emails and other conversations, are mainly used to circulate the most vital information of the organisations (Selden et al., 2013).

Communication and information sharing practices aim at providing employees with adequate information about major issues such as finance, operations, performance or

strategies of an organisation. These practices lead to guaranteed communication between the superiors and the subordinates. Empirical literature come to an agreement that communication and information practices are crucial in the case of fostering the individual voice of an employee. Here the free flow of communication can take place in systems regarding suggestions, complaint making or surveys. (Demirbag et al., 2014). Decision makers in an organisation often fail to understand employees' true emotions because of the inherent complexity (Kahneman et al., 1982). Therefore, it is comprehensible that management may make wrong decisions by misjudging situations. It is essential in such cases to receive assistance from colleagues in order to collect information regarding the environment and better accumulate alternatives in order to rectify those actions. According to Wright et al. (1997), HR executives are found to be weaker compared to HR generalists as the executives are seen to be unable to interpret the strategic goals of an organisation into HR practices; while generalists are more conversant with the issues of human capital. In order to promote and enhance organisational performance, transparency in communication plays a major role among employees. It is understood that by decentralizing power and involving workers, an organisation can facilitate market evaluation and transform its human capital as a competitive advantage. Such a unique competitive system can be acquired through the appropriate decentralization of power and participation of the worker in any operating unit of an organisation (Wright et al., 1997). The free-flow communication and sharing of information process is undeniably necessary in an organisation of any work infrastructure (Shih et al., 2006), which is one of the vital components in HPWS organisation (Evans and Davis, 2005; Fu, 2013). However, neither transparent communication nor information sharing between superiors and subordinates are as transparent in a low power distance culture. The relationship between superior and subordinates is more formal than friendly (Miah et al., 2001; Prince, 2011). The next chapter will discuss in more detail the high power distance cultural dimension and its impact on HR practices in an organisation. Based on the above

account, it could be argued that communication and information sharing in an organisation positively impacts employee performance.

Table 2.3: Categories of HR practices comprising high performance work system (HPWS)

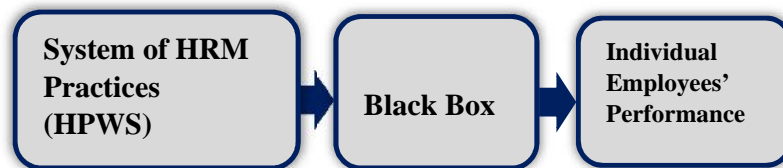
Human Resource Practices Category	
Categories	Description
Recruitment and Selection	<p>A thorough process of the evaluation of all relevant set of skills, knowledge and abilities according to the job and the organisation.</p> <p>Example:</p> <p>Careful and thorough screening through multiple sources.</p> <p>Evaluation of technical and interpersonal skills, attitudes, and personality.</p> <p>Performance based or seniority-based promotion.</p>
Training and Development	<p>Extensive of formalized programmes to expand employees' professional and firm-specific knowledge, management skills, and communication abilities, and team working abilities;</p> <p>Example:</p> <p>Training to develop current and future skills, including technical and interpersonal, cross-training, training for both new hires and experienced employees.</p>
Compensation	<p>Performance-based pay, Group-based pay, Above-market pay policies.</p> <p>Example:</p> <p>Profit/gain sharing, employee ownership, comparatively high level of pay, team-based pay, and performance-based pay.</p>
Performance appraisal	<p>Providing feedback to improve employees' performance</p> <p>Encourage employees to embrace errors in exploring new knowledge.</p> <p>Example:</p> <p>Performance appraisals from multiple sources, casual and unbiased monitoring reports.</p>
Communication and information sharing	<p>Open vertical and horizontal communication channels providing admittance to information and opportunities to express own perspective.</p> <p>Support transference of tasks and responsibilities to employees.</p> <p>Example:</p> <p>Access to all levels of operating results, employee suggestion systems, explanation of business strategy, decline of status boundary between managers and employees.</p>

Note: Based on Evans and Davis (2005); and Fu, (2013).

2.3.5 Performance.

There are many reasons why the connection between the HPWS system and organisational performance is still referred to as the ‘black box’ in all the existing literature. The literature review shows little evidence of empirical research carried out to explore the processes of the ‘black box’ phenomena. There is an absence of clarification about what exactly leads to what (Wright and Gardner, 2003; Gerhart, 2005; Mansour et al., 2013). The black box has been presented in (Figure-1) and it reflects the processes through which the practices of HRM usually affect organisational performance. Or in a broader sense, it is the causal link that is initiated through HRM practices in the people and their performance (Boselie et al., 2005).

Figure 1: HRM practices in relation to the organisational performance.



Further, explanations given by Paauwe (2009) defined the term black box as the major intervening variable which constructs the connection between HRM policies and practices and the performance of the organisation. Katou and Budhwar (2007) emphasised that the mediating variables derived from the black box, make up the linear causal process between the variables that help construct the relationship between the HRM and performance. Mansour et al. (2013) opined that HPWS consistently have a positive influence on an organisation’s performance; yet, there is still lack of understanding of how and through which intermediary mechanisms the HPWS contribute to the performance outcome. Therefore, various conceptual models were formulated to understand the connection between high performance work system (HPWS) and its effects on the development of organisational performance. It was also argued that the variables mediating or moderating processes through the black box should be considered vital to the methods by which the HR policies and practices lead to a firm performance (Park et al., 2003; Becker and Huselid, 2006).

However, researchers cannot reach a general agreement on the definition of performance. (Guest, 1997). Therefore, different researchers (Guest, 1997; Armstrong et al., 2010) define performance in different ways. Guest (1997:266), describes it as ‘a company-dominated criterion’. Whereas, other researchers stated that performance is based on four aspects – quality, cost, delivery and flexibility of product (Lee and Lee, 2015). Armstrong et al. (2010), on the other hand, based their theory on the AMO framework advocating that employee performance depends mainly on the abilities, motivation and opportunities received by employees. This means that if employees’ are managed by the employers in an organisation by providing them with necessary skills and abilities to perform well in the job, well compensate their employees’ to stay motivated, and have transparent communication and information sharing practices in place between managers and employees’ these will all positively contributes to the overall organisational performance.

Appelbaum et al. (2000) and Boxall (2003) suggested that performance is really a function of the workforce concerning the abilities, motivations and the opportunities they receive. Organisations can take advantage of the potential of their employees and discretionary judgement only when these factors are implemented in their appropriate conditions. An emphasis was placed on the significance of employee behaviours in order to measure performance. Positive behaviours, for example, enable employees to approach customers in a better and satisfactory way following safety measures (Guest, 1997). The consequential outcomes can contribute to the overall performance of an organisation. Messersmith and Guthrie (2010) collected data from emerging organisations focusing on their sales growth, innovation and turnover rate in order to better understand the connection between HPWS and organisational performance.

In addition, researchers in recent times are now emphasizing employee outcomes as they continue to explore the relationship between high performance work system and organisational performance. Zhang and Morris (2014) point out numerous reasons as to why

the underlying operation of the HPWS and performance link is actually comprised of the outcomes of employee performance. Firstly, they emphasize how HPWS has a direct influence on the individual employee, as the mechanism depends on the outcomes of an individual to yield and enhance the performance of a collective. Secondly, employee outcomes derive the linkage between HPWS and organisational performance as provided by the empirical literature of researchers (Zhang and Morris, 2014; Kehoe and Wright, 2013). For example, Zhang and Morris (2014) collected data from 168 organisations in China and established that the connection between high performance work system and the overall performance of an organisation relies on the attitudes, behaviours and abilities that results into individual employee outcomes. Whereas Kehoe and Wright (2013) also verified how there is a positive influence of HPWS on performances of the employee, namely tendency to participate as an organisational citizen, affective commitment, intention of remaining with the organisation and non-attendance. Further, measures of employee outcome include job satisfaction and affective commitment (Mao et al., 2013), employee service behaviour (Rubel et al., 2018), and employee service performance and organisational citizenship behaviour (Nadeem et al., 2019). However, building further upon the line of research, the present research focuses on individual employee outcome of job satisfaction, affective commitment and trust in management as mediating variables in the HPWS-performance relationship which in turn enhances employee performance.

2.3.6 Relationship between high performance work system (HPWS) and performance

The resulting factors of HPWS research makes it clear that if HPWS practices are used properly then these specific practices can enhance organisational performance, develop sustainable competitive advantage and add value to specific HR activities (Boxall and Macky, 2009; Chang and Cheng, 2011). There is a growing amount of evidence from empirical research that proves high performance work system (HPWS) can indeed have a positive impact on organisational performance. For example, it has been found that HPWS positively

affects the organisational turnover (Guthrie, 2001, Huselid, 1995), organisational productivity (Guthrie, 2001) and organisations' financial performance (Guthrie, 2001; Huselid, 1995). In addition, most of the empirical research in the industrialised western countries has been strongly associated with HPWS and organisational performance (Delaney and Huselid, 1996; Huselid, 1995; Lawler et al., 1998; Huselid and Rau, 1997). This indicates that the majority of the studies related to HPWS and performance have been conducted in the western part of the world (Akhter et al., 2016; Muduli et al., 2016; Mihail and Kloutsiniotis, 2016).

However, the growing industrialisation in eastern countries has broadened the horizon of countries such as India, China, Japan and Korea. The success of HPWS has led to a cross-cultural transfer of HR practices. Previous studies suggest that most of the MNCs are influenced by the different cultural and institutional contexts while implementing HR practices (Murali and Devidas, 2016). Though rather limited, some empirical work has been conducted in Asian countries to evaluate the relationship between HPWS and organisational performance (Table 2.4) provides brief empirical evidence for the aforementioned argument. For example, a recent study done by Muduli, et al., (2016) investigated whether HPWS that is associated with employee engagement can advance organisational performance in the banking sector of India. The findings suggested that aligning employee engagement in the HPWS leads to enhanced level of organisational performance. Another study conducted by Absar et al. (2012) highlighted that performance appraisal has a positive impact on an organisation's market performance in manufacturing industries of Bangladesh. A recent study conducted in the Bangladesh banking sector revealed that western style HR practices may not necessarily enhance the organisational performance due to its contextual differences (Khan, 2015). In contrast, Wang et al. (2011) found the presence of an exclusive context in China for researchers to test how western HPWS work in a rapidly changing economy. Further, the results showed the importance of the role of organisational culture in understanding employee's attitudes to particular managerial practices. Although the mentioned studies

contributed to minimising the research gap in the HRM practices, there is still a considerable knowledge gap related to the impact of HPWS practices on MNCs in Bangladesh.

On the contrary, other studies have stressed that even though HPWS have the tendency to lead to positive results, their practical implementation of them is not always cost-effective (Appelbaum et al., 2000). In addition, some scholars have emphasised that while the aim of HPWS is to create a competitive advantage for organisations, they often end up neglecting the individual employees, which can result in an enhanced work surplus, burnout and increased strain for individuals (Barney and Wright, 1998). As a consequence, it is fair to say that employees are the key factors in increasing the performance parameters of the organisation. Employees' perception being neglected will result in stressful situations rather than motivational experiences.

It is important to note that a majority of previous studies have focused on data evaluated by managers to examine the connections of HPWS-performance (Patel et al., 2013; Sun et al., 2007), while ignoring the significant roles of the employees. Further to this, some researchers have argued that HR managers might overemphasize the extent of HPWS practices existing in their organisation (Bowen and Ostroff, 2004; Wright and Boswell, 2002). Choi (2014:2668) further reinforced this view and indicated that measures of this type could be deemed as biased as senior level executives may gauge the actualisation of HPWS more favourably than is perceived by the recipient employees. According to a contemporary investigation conducted by Hefferman and Dundan (2016), employees are the primary recipients of HPWS practices. Thus, employees are the most important raters of HPWS practices, while examining how HPWS influences organisational performance as an underlying mechanism (Choi, 2014; Hefferman and Dundan (2016). Therefore, the current research adopted a multi-method research approach combining quantitative and qualitative data from employees and managers perspectives to answer the research question and to bridge the existing gap between HPWS and performance outcome.

Table 2.4: The highlights of the studies in South Asia related to the proposed study.

Author/s	Location	Focus	Study method	Findings
Wang et al., (2011)	China	Examines HPWS techniques on workers job attitude and work behaviours.	Quantitative research method using regression analysis and model test.	The study indicated China has unique context for researchers to test how western management theories work in a rapidly changing economy of China. In addition, the result showed the importance of the role of organisational culture to understand employee's attitudes to particular managerial practices.
Foley et al., (2012)	Hong Kong	The study examines the determinants and outcomes of the HPWS in foreign subsidiaries of multinational corporations.	Quantitative research method using SEM and model test.	The findings support HPWS had a positive effect on subsidiaries performance, and this positive effect was partially mediated by organisational climate.
Chowdhury and Mahmud, (2012)	European multinational subsidiaries in Bangladesh	Examined specific HRM practices, such as recruitment and selection, training and development, pay and performance appraisal, and industrial relations of four multinational subsidiaries in Bangladesh.	Qualitative research method using case study approach, observation and interviews.	Effect of societal impact (i.e., host country practices) was high in pay and performance appraisal and industrial relations, while training and development was observed to be low.
Rasool and Nouman, (2013)	Private Hospital in Pakistan	HPWS and their effect on firm performance is examined.	Mixed method case study research approach	Firm performance was measured using perceptual measures of the organisation's employees. The result indicated that the HPWS have a significant positive effect on firm performance.

Author/s	Location	Focus	Study method	Findings
Khan, (2015)	Banking sector in Bangladesh	The aim of the study was to demonstrate the importance of internal and external context in HPWS studies.	Qualitative study used information from secondary sources and interviews with the industry experts.	The study argues that western-style HR practices may not necessarily improve organisations performance. The findings suggest that external context of Bangladesh plays a significant role in defining the HPWS context in Bangladeshi banking sector.
Muduli et al., (2016)	Banking sector in India	The research aims at examining the relevance of HPWS in Indian context by testing employee engagement as a mediating variable.	Quantitative research method using SEM.	The findings of the research proved that HPWS aligned with employee engagement can significantly improve organisational performance.
Akhter et al., (2016)	Financial sector in Pakistan	The study aims to find the impact of HPWS on employee performance.	Quantitative research method using SEM.	The findings of the research confirmed that employee engagement mediated the relationship between HPWS and employee performance.
Ananthram et al., (2018)	Service sector in India	The aim of the study was to investigate the direct and mediation effects between HPWS and employee attitude.	Quantitative research method using SEM	The result suggested that Indian call centres might be beneficial by adopting HPWS since the study contributes positively towards the job satisfaction, employee engagement and well -being of employees.
Nadeem et al., (2019)	Service sector in Pakistan	The purpose of the study is to investigate the relationship between HPWS and employee service level performance and organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB).	Quantitative research method using SEM	The findings indicated that there is a positive link between HPWS and employee service level performance and organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) and employee resilience partially mediates the relationship between HPWS and employee service level performance and OCB

An overview of HPWS is provided as the author discussed the background of the study that connects HPWS with an organisation's greater performance outcome. The chapter discussed the concept of HRM, Strategic HRM practices, high performance work system (HPWS), various terminologies and definitions of HPWS used by scholars in strategic HRM studies and also contradictions and commonalities in the HPWS studies. This section also detailed the five main identified individual HR practices as the HPWS dimensions used in the present study.

SHRM studies suggests that a HR system should be comprised of a bundle of practices rather than only focused on individual HR practices. HPWS builds on the notion that individual HR practices can create a positive impact on performance; however, integrating these practices with each other will be even more successful (McDuffie 1995; Takeuchi et al., 2007; Combs et al., 2006). In line with some scholars (Evans and Davis, 2005; Guthrie et al., 2009; Fu, 2013), the present study reflects five important HR practices in HPWS dimensions. Building on prior studies, the researcher proposes the AMO model that suggests specific HR practices which enhance the three main components of the model. In addition, some researchers suggest the appropriateness of conceptualising HPWS into the AMO frameworks by grouping HR practices as ability, motivation and opportunity enhancing practices (Applebaum et al., 2000; Claudia, 2015, Jiang et al., 2012; Bos-Nehles et al., 2013). Therefore, the present study selected recruitment and selection, as well as training and development practices as ability enhancing practices, performance appraisal and compensation as motivation enhancing practices and communication and information sharing HR practices as opportunity enhancing practices.

Furthermore, the [present](#) chapter identified that several studies have been conducted around the world that focus on HPWS and organisational performance. These studies suggest that HPWS have a positive impact on performance outcome (Boxall and Macky, 2009; Wu and Chaturvedi, 2009; Mansour et al., 2013, Muduli et al., 2015; Ananthram et al., 2016). However, the underlying mechanism by which HPWS contributes to the performance outcome has

received far less attention (Wu and Chaturvedi, 2009; Mansour et al., 2013; Muduli, et al., 2015). Although, there have been many attempts to find out the underlying mechanism through which HPWS impacts the performance outcome, the result is still unclear. HPWS studies have emphasised that it is crucial to consider the impact of HPWS on employee attitudes as the main indicator; and this may be considered as the intermediary mechanism in the link between HPWS and performance (Messersmith et al., 2011; Muduli, et al., 2015; Kehoe and Wright, 2013; Zhang and Morris, 2014). In addition, the current review shows that there is an insignificant number of HPWS studies relating to non-western contexts (Akhter et al., 2016; Mudui et al., 2016; Mihail and Kloutsiniotis, 2016), especially concerning South Asian countries in particular Bangladesh. The need for more research on HPWS in the South Asian context has been identified by a number of scholars (Budhwar and Sparrow, 2002; Miah and Kitamura, 2005; Miah and Hossain, 2014). Therefore, it is expected that this study will develop the knowledge base of developing countries regarding HPWS which can in turn extend the SHRM literature.

In the next chapter, [the extensive literature review](#) and conceptual model of the study is presented. First, the author discusses the theoretical perspective that underpins the underlying processes by which HPWS influences employee performance. A further discussion of literature review will proceed with the conceptual model that will be tested eventually in the quantitative phase of the study. The theoretical grounding will then constitute the hypotheses that are tested by statistical analysis. The present study extends previous research on the relationship between HPWS and employee performance by examining the mediating and moderating effects of employee attitudes and institutional context on the relationship between HPWS and employee performance. This is also discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 3

Literature review, Hypotheses Development and Model Specification

Introduction

This chapter provides a critical literature review of HPWS. It reviews the theoretical foundations and the conceptual framework, which has been developed to understand the relationship between HPWS practices and employee performance outcome with other related variables and the relationship between HPWS and employee attitudes, such as job satisfaction, affective commitment and trust in management. At the end of each topic a research hypotheses are developed that subsequently form the basis of this study. The chapter presents a critique of the major theories that have dominated the HRM-employee outcome literature. The chapter also provides major studies that have examined. Furthermore, as a developing country context, Bangladesh is classified as being collectivist in context with high power distance culture. Due to its complexity, HPWS and employee performance are likely to influence its cultural dimension compared to the western context. Therefore, the literature pertinent to study are discussed. The hypotheses are developed and presented after a review of relevant literature in each topic.

3.1 Theoretical Underpinning for HPWS and Performance

The research on the performance in the SHRM and HR practices shows that a variety of theoretical perspectives support the mechanism underlying it (Boselie et al., 2005; Armstrong, 2011; Messersmith et al., 2011; Fu et al., 2015). Researchers have deemed the key mediating factors as incomprehensive and unclear, even though empirical research has already been conducted to find the connection between HPWS and the overall organisational performance. The explanation of why and how HPWS is linked with firm performance relies on theories of

strategic human resource management (SHRM) (Messersmith et. al., 2011; Fu et al., 2015; Rasool and Nouman, 2013; Martin-Tapia et al., 2009; Ozelik et al., 2016). Therefore, there is a need to develop theoretical assumptions regarding the process through which HPWS influences employee performance.

There are two theories that traditionally influence the connection between HR practices and organisational performance more than the empirical evidence found. As stated by Jiang et al. (2012), the two theories are the resource-based view (RBV) and the behavioural perspective. According to the RBV theory, HR has the power to create competitive advantage for organisations as a value-adding component (Barney, 1991). The view justifies the investment of HPWS as a benefit to the people of the specific organisation by controlling the overall performance of the organisation (Wright et al, 2001). The behavioural perspective, on the other hand, emphasizes the encouragement and motivation that is generated through HR practices engaging the human capital in more productive output. Under this view, employee ability-motivation-opportunity (AMO) can be seen as the connecting mechanism that generates high performance (Appelbaum et al, 2000; Lepak et al, 2006; Armstrong et al, 2011). This thesis is based on these two theories through which the relationship between HPWS and employee performance can be examined. Hence, in the following paragraphs, the most researched theoretical foundations for the HRM-performance mechanism are discussed.

3.1.1 The Resource-Based View (RBV)

A number of theoretical frameworks have been used to explain how and why HPWS leads to a sustained competitive advantage. However, the resource-based view has been used as the theoretical underpinning in most HRM research to establish positive impact on the firm's performance (Barney, 1991, Wright et. al, 2001, Messersmith et al, 2011; Fu et al., 2015). According to the resource-based view of the organisation (RBV) theory, in order for a resource to qualify as a source of a sustained competitive advantage, the resource must add value to the

organisation, be rare and imperfectly imitable, and not have any adequate substitutes (Barney, 1991, Fu et. al, 2015). More specifically, the resource-based view argues that four attributes be considered as a source of sustained advantage: (a) valuable; (b) rare; (c) imperfectly imitable; and (d) non-substitutable (Barney, 1991).

It has been stated by RBV that an organisation can only grow its own competitive advantage when it develops, combines and utilizes as desired the individual and organisational resources it acquires. By doing so, the researcher Barney (1991) claims that a unique value is added to the organisation that is inimitable by its competitors. It is suggested by the term RBV that organisations should look into their human capital and intellectual capacity for a competitive advantage. It is believed by researchers (Wright et al. 2001; Takeuchi et al., 2007) that the sources of competitive advantage come from resources that are unique or rare, inimitable and cannot be substituted. In the present context, value can be defined as a resource that makes full use of opportunities or invalidates threats to the organisation. Whereas, the definition of rarity is a resource that cannot be obtained easily by the large markets and competitors of an organisation (Barney, 1991). An inimitable resource means that it is impossible to be copied or reproduced, like machinery or technology. Lastly, when a resource cannot be substituted, it refers to the impossibility of being able to acquire the same benefits by the competitors of an organisation (Barney, 1991). Upon meeting all the factors mentioned, an organisation is said to have met all the requirements to obtain a competitive advantage that is sustainable (Boxall and Macky, 2007; Barney, 1991).

The concept of HPWS practices assumes that employees are a primary source of competitive advantage, making it difficult to imitate. Every business these days looks for a competitive advantage that can set them apart. Therefore, businesses must be able to create HR practices that are firm specific and cannot be copied by their competitors (Barney, 1991). For example, intangible resources such as knowledge are more difficult to imitate, and as a

consequence, they are important for the firm to maintain (Barney, 1991; Rasool and Nouman, 2013; Fu et. al, 2015). What is more, employees can exhibit continuous improvement and perform at their best level if they are motivated to do so. For instance, an organisation can create an environment where employees are allowed in open conversations so they can learn to take their own initiatives, by providing high quality training and development opportunities so employees can enhance their skills and abilities. Information sharing among employees is also important to create opportunities to grow within the organisation.

Before the arrival of a resource-based view, organisations used to believe that a strong and strategic management should look forward to acquiring external factors such as the position of the organisation, as it is said to govern the profitability of the company (Boxall and Macky, 2007). With the arrival of RBV, a strategic management is considered to be a focus on the interior factors of an organisation (Barney,1991). Although, it had been discussed in detail by earlier researchers (i.e., Rumelt, 1984; Wernerfelt, 1984; Dierickx and Cool, 1989) that the resources of an organisation can indeed contribute to gain and develop the competitive advantage that can be easily sustained.

The RBV quickly gained enough attention to become the underlying foundation of the basic theory of most of the present strategic management from which knowledge-based views are derived about an organisation (Grant, 1996), its human resources (Hitt et al., 2011), and the dynamic abilities of the organisation (Teece et al., 1997). Even with such appreciation, the resource-based view is not without criticism. It has been suggested by researchers (Priem and Butler, 2001) that RBV cannot be treated as a true theory in constitution. Two general issues were raised. First, it was claimed that RBV was true by virtue of its logical form alone – that is, the claims of RBV is in definition a truth but it is not subjected to verification. Secondly, the RBV perspective has a restricted ability to be prescribed as a theory. This criticism draws four segments into which the restrictions are sorted. Firstly, the personality traits that can give

rise to strategic advantage cannot be compliant in theory. Secondly, there is no specific context to where this theory can be applicable. Thirdly, resources are defined here as all-inclusive, and lastly, the theory is not dynamic but static. This is why, even with its wide acceptance in SHRM literature, the theory still faces hurdles (i.e., Foss and Knudsen, 2003; Priem and Butler, 2001).

However, further researchers have argued that organisational performance does not stem from HR practices alone but from the human efforts, which translates via HR practices (Wright et al., 1997; Barney and Wright, 1998). Therefore, HR practices are effective tools when employees are equipped with proper skills, knowledge and motivation, which in turn can provide a sustainable competitive advantage to an organisation (Martin-Tapia et al; 2009; Ozcelik et al., 2016). In this thesis, HPWS (i.e., recruitment and selection, training and development, compensation, performance appraisal and communication and information sharing) are value adding because these practices positively influence organisations' human resources. Based on this logic, in this study, employees display high levels of discretionary behaviours that ultimately lead to higher levels of organisational effectiveness and employee performance. Using RBV theory, this study proposes that human resources are a source of an organisation's competitive advantage.

3.1.2 Ability-Motivation-Opportunity (AMO) Theory

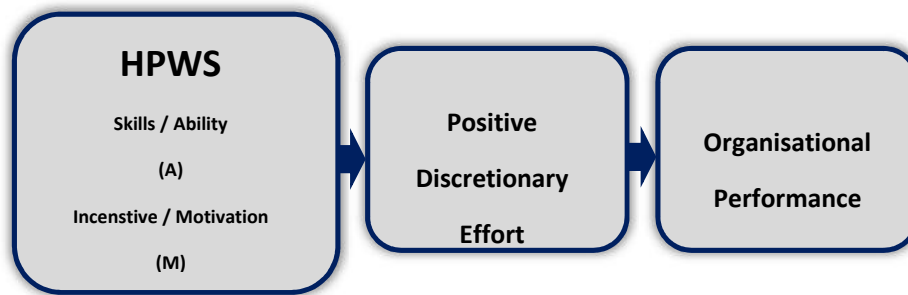
AMO theory is one of the most popular theories that can help in understanding the relationship between HPWS and employee behavioural outcomes in the organisation (Appelbaum et al., 2001). The model describes that managers can enhance employee performance by positively influencing an employee's ability (A) to perform, motivating (M) them to perform and providing opportunities (O) for them to perform in the workplace (Boxall et al., 2007; Fu et al., 2015; Bos-Nehles et al., 2013).

The relationship of the role of the AMO theory in Human Resources Management practices has been supported by researchers such as Bos-Nehles et al. (2013), Paauwe (2009),

Fu et al. (2015) and more. This is why the structure of AMO theory controls and dominates the selection of HRM practices that are to be implemented (Bos-Nehles et al., 2013). Based on the views of this structure, three interrelated factors were chosen (Hyde et al., 2009). First, to enhance employees' performance, they should have the necessary skills and abilities. Second, employees should be properly motivated so they can put more effort into their performance. And finally, employees should be given enough opportunities so they can make full use of their potential. In the same way, researchers admit that the implementation of HR practices is bound to put positive effects on the overall organisational performance by enhancing the abilities (through selective recruitment and training), through motivation (through unbiased performance appraisal, performance-based wage system) and via opportunities for voluntary contribution (through a free-flow of communication and information sharing) within the workforce (Gerhart, 2005). Another important suggestion made by the AMO theory is that upon the implementation of HPWS practices, employees obtain job satisfaction, develop a commitment towards the organisation and have a reduction in stress level in work, all of which impacts positively on the organisational performance (Van De et al., 2012).

Furthermore, the AMO model suggests that HPWS is based on three important components to use employees' discretionary effort (Appelbaum et al., 2000; Boxall and Purcell, 2003; Martin-Garcia and Tomas, 2016). Therefore, the AMO model suggests that organisational performance is a function of employee ability, motivation and opportunity to participate, and employees are likely to perform well in their job when (a) they achieve the necessary skills and knowledge to perform that job (abilities), (b) they are enthusiastic and properly rewarded to do the job (motivation), and (c) their work environment supports the expression of their opinions (opportunity to participate) (Boxall, Purcell and Wright; 2008). According to the AMO model, discretionary effort will positively influence organisational performance (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: The AMO model of performance



Source: Adapted from Appelbaum et al., (2000)

Paauwe and Boselie (2005:69) explain that in SHRM research, the theory of AMO is ‘the only one applied in more than half of all articles published after 2000’. Paauwe (2009) further asserts that a portion of the vital practices of HRM is more or less parallel to HPWS. Similarly, Ehrnrooth and Bjorkman (2012) added that the AMO framework or model implies there is a positive influence of HRM practices on the individual performance of the employees. The concept of the AMO theory is aligned with contemporary research that concentrates on the effectiveness of HRM practices over the individual and the organisational performance (Fu et al., 2015; Muduli et al., 2016; Martin-Garcia and Tomas, 2016; Obeidat et al., 2016). For example, Fu et al., (2015) conducted a study to examine how HPWS impacts a professional service firm’s (PSF) performance in Ireland. The study employed the AMO theory to investigate and found a positive link between HPWS and the PSF’s performance. The researchers argued that HPWS by the PSF created high quality human capital through extensive training practices along with performance management and employee communication channels in place, which enabled employees to be more effective and motivated to perform their tasks. Similarly, relying on the AMO theory, a study in the Korean firm context conducted an investigation considering cross-cultural competencies as abilities, the collaborative climate as motivation, and the firm level internationalization as opportunity. The study revealed that

organisations perform better when they are provided with a supportive climate and also supported by adequate internationalization levels for their employees to develop their professional skills (Martin-Garcia and Tomas, 2016).

The underlying assumption of the AMO theory is that it focuses on an employee-based model, which relates to employees' AMO when implementing HR practices to performance-related outcomes. The need to perform better necessitates that every individual achieves the necessary skills and knowledge in his/her job. For example, extensive recruitment and selection practices at the entry level can target potential employee knowledge, skills and abilities. In addition, employee training and development activities can further enhance these competencies and skills through a need-based training programme (Appelbaum et al., 2000; Macky and Boxall, 2007; Obeidat et al., 2016). In HPWS practices, employees need more knowledge, general skills and job-specific skills across varied organisational activities. The AMO model suggests that when an organisation decides to invest in their human capital to develop specialised skills, the value of their employees is enhanced, which becomes difficult to transfer or copy. Research suggests that the regularly following employee obedience under strict monitoring of the management is not enough to bring out the best in employee performance, which can be otherwise be achieved by providing the employees with opportunities and by encouraging them to participate in decision-making processes (Appelbaum et al., 2000). Therefore, the AMO framework suggests that organisations can motivate employees, which involves a set of motivation-based HR practices, such as financial and non-financial incentives, pay for performance, career progression opportunities, creation of climate of trust among employees and other related benefits (Martin-Garcia and Tomas, 2016; Obeidat et al., 2016).

One of the important components of HPWS practices is to design work environments where the employees can exercise their effort voluntarily. To provide opportunities for employees, the organisation should create multifaceted opportunities that involve teamwork,

workplace empowerment and develop the free flow of communication between the employees and their superiors, which in turn reduces status differences (Macky and Boxall, 2007; Lawler et al. 2011, Fu et. al, 2015). Specifically, the process mainly suggests decentralizing a collection and allowing a free flow of communication among the network of employees. In this way, employees can enhance their performance in their own organisation when they are provided with appropriate responsibility, authority and opportunity to make decisions and to solve problems (Batt, 2002; Martin-Garcia and Tomas, 2016). Jiang et al. (2012) had conducted a number of quantitative analyses that established that the three-dimensional AMO model could be thought of as a platform that conceptualizes the HRM system. Similarly, Obeidat et al., (2016) confirmed that the AMO model is effective during the validation of the connection between HPWS practices and the outcome of the overall organisational performance.

However, the limitation of previous literature still lacks empirical evidence by validating the AMO framework in the context of South-Asian countries. Nonetheless, in spite of the popularity of the theory and its empirical evidence in the western part of the world, the literature review reflects the lack of much information over the AMO theory in relation to HPWS practices and employee performance in the context of Bangladesh. Therefore, to further this line of research, the present study addresses this absence in the knowledge base by positioning the AMO theory as a suitable framework to measure the underlying mechanism between HPWS practices and employee performance. The study, therefore, presents the reader with a number of hypotheses that are built upon a bundle of HR practices designing HPWS to influence employee performance through the development of their skill, motivation and opportunity to participate. The hypotheses are further studied and developed in the following sections through a literature review. Following the arguments mentioned above, this study proposes HPWS practices have a positive impact on the overall employee performance outcome of telecom organisations in Bangladesh. On the basis of the AMO theory, this study

proposes that HPWS is positively related to employee attitude, which in turn influences enhanced employee performance. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 1: HPWS practices directly and positively impact employee performance (AMO).

3.2 HPWS and Institutional Considerations

A growing number of literatures on international human resource management (IHRM) research is a result of the globalization that can be seen in the overseas markets through the help of present information and communication technologies (ICT) while multinational companies become more important (Harzing and Pinnington, 2010). IHRM is concerned with human resource management policies and practices in multi-national companies. Its aim is to make sure an international organisation attracts, develops and involves the highly skilled people it requires to fulfil its business objectives (Armstrong and Taylor, 2014). The increasing competition among both national and international organisations with the rapid expansion of markets in Eastern Europe, Southeast Asia, India and China runs parallel to the greater need of developing a clear idea of human resources management active in different parts of the world (Harzing and Pinnington, 2010).

Challenges of the globalization and its effect on HR practices received a positive reaction from the academics proposing that different HRM approaches should be taken accordingly (Warner et al, 2005). Most of the researchers of IHRM concern themselves with the design of the HRM processes in multinational companies, in relation to institutional environment, societal norms, regulations of the government and comparative analyses of HRM practices across different economies (Metcalf and Rees, 2005). Issues such as culture and acculturation are also of significant value to them as well. Still, it can be seen that the theoretical models and concepts that stand out the most are based under American and European contexts. Therefore, it can be questioned as to how these Anglo-Saxon HRM approaches can be relevant

as application and experience for human resources of emerging economies, such as Asian countries (Rowley and Warner, 2007).

Multinational managers work in a challenging global environment. They operate and maintain sophisticated HR practices to manage their diverse workforce (Foley et al., 2012). It is important to examine the connection between a MNCs HRM practices and its impact on organisational performance and how this relationship varies in different countries' contexts. It is evident that MNCs are more interested in using high performance work systems. Therefore, many studies have been conducted to examine its elements and outcomes (see Marchington and Grugulis, 2000; Foley et al., 2012; Thite et al., 2013; Demirbag et al., 2014; Murali and Devidas, 2016). For example, according to Thite et al., (2013), almost all multi-national companies (MNC) have similarities with their country of origin. Perhaps it could be unintentional choices, which are influenced by the cultural and institutional characteristics of the multi-national's country of origin, which is transferred via the people who work in the organisation. Similarly, Foley et al. (2012) stated, for MNCs, variations in their origins reflect different economic, cultural and institutional influences that may pose different relationships between home and host countries. Several authors have acknowledged that HRM practices represent major restrictions when multi-national companies are trying to implement global strategies in the different cultural and institutional frameworks of each affiliate where the MNCs operate (Myloni et al., 2007; Miah and Hossain, 2014). For example, MNCs of USA have been contrasted with MNCs of Japan in regards to their HRM practices in their subsidiaries. It was observed that U.S. MNCs have extensive control over their subsidiaries, which is standardized worldwide (Ferner, 1997). Whereas, Japanese multinationals have the characteristics of being strong but with informal centralization and they are highly reliant on establishing an international network. Therefore, it can be argued that headquarter influence is stronger in U.S. MNCs than in other MNCs worldwide. Thus, it reflects that the control of HR

practices is a key feature of subsidiary management, and MNCs closely monitor and discipline foreign subsidiaries (Gomez and Sanchez, 2005). Since HRM practices like recruitment and selection, training and development, compensation, performance appraisal, communication and information sharing can be used to direct and modify employee behaviours, it is argued that this view of HRM practices works as a control mechanism for employee behavioural perspectives as a means of managing the behaviours of employees (Schuler and Jackson, 2005).

Evidence continually reveals how an effectively managed workforce can result in a sustained and competitive advantage to the organisation itself (Pfeffer, 1994; Jackson and Schuler, 1995). Values, such as a better response to the demands of the market, can be achieved when the human capital of an organisation is treated as a prospective source of advantage. As Barney (1991) states, the skills and experiences of the employees create an inimitable pool of creative ideas and breakthroughs that cannot be substituted. Operating the human capital effectively can decide the level of the overall organisational performance (Adler, 1998).

A continual debate keeps growing in the sectors of both international and comparative HRMs regarding the convergence and divergence theories, in particular institutional theory, to explain the similarities and differences in HRM practices (Shaw et al., 1995; Chow, 2004; Budhwar et al., 2016). Theories regarding convergence suggest that a growing similarity in the practices of HRM follows the growing demands of globalization and industrialization. Influence on the national HRM processes by multinational companies can be seen in the contemporary Chinese context, but looking back, it was already evident in Taiwan from the 1980s (Shaw et al., 1995) and further back in Hong Kong from the 1970s. On the other hand, divergence denies the argument that a variety of configurations regarding the political structure, culture and society works together to give rise to the different systems of HRM. Therefore, the legal processes and the subjectivity of social regulations, along with the degree of unity and attitude towards the superior levels, act as constraints during the formation of HR practices.

Institutional influences can vary from one organisation to another and thus, they are likely to use different practices of HR. Therefore, features of the HRM system, such as professionalism and the exhibition of bureaucracy, can very well influence the performance of an organisation. Many researchers (Macduffie, 1995; Huselid, 1995; Von Glinow et al., 2002) claim that through the literature of best practices and HPWS, it is evident how the practices of HRM in an internally consistent configuration can give rise to effective outcomes in an organisation. Various structures of ownership and environments in different enterprises of the multinational companies raise a variety of HRM practices.

The comparison between different HRM practices is struck through theories such as the institutional theory. The institutional theory looks at the organisation as an entity of the society that is indebted to the approval of an environment constructed socially regarding their performance (Scott, 1995). The term institution, therefore, depends on two factors: informal and formal. The legal system falls under the formal institution, so in a way, it is more visible than informal institutions. Informal institutions are less tangible, and thus less visible than the formal ones as they nest deep inside the culture, giving a network of structure to the formal constraints on a superficial level (Redding, 2003). An amalgamation of these features occurs at every organisation, including the multinational organisations, to classify the behaviour in any given environment of business. Therefore, researchers such as Hollingsworth and Boyer (1997) emphasize how the transactions in any organisation take place within these significant social setups while DiMaggio and Powell (1983) refer to the achievement of legitimacy and efficiency through to adherence to the significant formal setup as well as the informal norms and customs.

The institutional environment binds an organisation to certain features, such as compulsory legal rules, legitimacy, rules of the institution, and so on, adapting to outside forces. According to many researchers (Powell and Dimaggio, 1991; Redding, 2003), in order

to survive, organisations generally adapt themselves to the practices that are seen appropriate to become legitimate and also accepted by society. Facing similar environmental pressures leads an organisation to adopt an internal industry structure that is similar to all and also similar organisational practices. It is evident in the studies that encountering environments that are both politically and economically similar can cause the organisations to adopt similar approaches so they can resemble others in order to become legitimate in the institutional environment. Institutional elements that are rooted inside can be a stronger influence on the particular HRM policies and practices that encourage social well-being, effectiveness and competitiveness in the performance outcomes of the workforce.

HR practices depend on legal requirements and are subject to different regulations as well as the strength of unions and their attitudes towards management (Budhwar et al., 2016). Organisations face different institutional influences, so it is obvious that the organisations will use different HR practices (Chowdhury and Mahmood, 2012). In addition, employees' particular skills and qualifications and management approaches are characterised by institutional environments. However, culture is another important foundation of institutional environments, being deeply embedded in social norms, values and beliefs (Hofstede, 1984). These combinations involve culture and different institutional perspectives, which also determine the human resource practices in a particular country in which the culture and institutional settings are significantly different from those in the west (North, 1990, Chowdhury and Mahmood, 2012).

One main theme of institutional theory is the diffusion process of a new institution. Exploring why and how an institution diffuses within organisational platforms is the main focus of the research arena (Thite et al., 2012). In addition, following the study of Kostova and Roth (2002), many studies have been conducted based on institutional theory to study international transfer of management practices. For instance, Demirbag et al. (2014) examined the HPWS

practices and organisational performance in MNCs operating in Turkey. The result shows that the usage of HPWS practices has a positive impact on employees' effectiveness. However, the study indicates that transfer of HRM practices over cultural and institutional borders is a slow process. Therefore, the finding suggests that HPWS practices need to consider context-specific institutional realities.

Although the theory made a significant contribution for these research areas, it still has opportunities for expansion. Therefore, it can be argued that institutional distances in a country affect the strength of the relationship between HPWS practices and employees' performance. According to institutional theory, organisations are social entities that seek approval for their performance in socially constructed environments (Scott, 1995). North (1990:3) asserts institutions are 'macro level rules of the game' that include formal constraints such as laws, regulations and constitutions and informal constraints such as social norms, conventions and self-imposed codes. Institutions are constructed by the people according to their own interaction in the sectors of politics, economics and social views, and thereby regard both the informal features, which are the customs, traditions, taboos, and so on, of a particular society, along with the formal features, such as rules and regulations, constitutional rights, etc. (North, 1991).

Social institutions influence managerial actions through a variety of processes, previous studies and theories, often arguing with the assumption that institutions fit into a unique typology, with each type having a unique way of affecting outcomes (Trevino et al., 2008). Perhaps the best known of these typologies is Scott's (1995) regulatory, cognitive and normative 'pillars' of institutional structure (Kostova et al., 2008; Scott, 1995). In essence, institutions and institutional environments are composed of three distinct 'pillars' (Trevino et al., 2008, Kostova et al., 2008). Borrowing from Scott's institutional approach, Kostova (1997) applied the pillars at the country level to build a three-dimensional country institutional profile. These three elements of social systems have all been identified by theorists as central elements

of institutions (Scott, 1995, Palthe, 2014). The institutional characteristics of a country reflect different dimensions of the national environment, including national government policies (regulatory dimension), widely shared social knowledge (cognitive dimension) and value systems (normative dimension) (Novikov, 2014).

According to Kostova (1997:180), regulatory dimension, or the pillar of a country's institutional characteristics, is 'existing laws and rules in a particular national environment that promote certain types of behaviours and restricts others.' Based upon the regulatory institutions – the existing laws and rules of the society that ensures its order and stability – stands the regulatory pillar (Streek and Schmitter, 1985; North, 1990). Murtha and Lenway (1994); in order to be recognized as legitimate, organisations have to be in compliance with the regulatory system's requirements. And yet, these organisations do possess the ability to influence the regulatory domain by a mediation of interest in the long run.

The cognitive pillar is built upon the cognitive school of institutional theory (Meyer and Rowan, 1977) and social psychology (Berger and Luckman, 1967). The established cognitive structures in the society legitimize the organisation through conformation or consistency. As stated by researchers such as Suchman (1995) and Aldrich and Fiol (1994), social statuses that are taken for granted are the means through which legitimization happens. The cognitive pillar of social institutions explains cognition, and actors generally share perceptions of what is taken for granted (Scott, 1995). According to Tang (2014), social cognition anticipates that an individual's acquired knowledge is partially affected by watching others when they interact socially. Therefore, the cognitive dimension of a nation's institutional profile demonstrates the cognitive structures and symbolic systems shared among individuals.

Finally, the normative pillar draws from the role of social values and obligation (Selznik, 1957). Parsons (1960) further explains that, from this point of view, the legitimization of an organisation grows from the correspondence of the organisation's values and the values

of the wider society. Meyer (1983) presumed that the correspondence of such values results in the level of cultural support an organisation may receive. In an institutional profile of a nation, elements under the normative domain include the values and social norms, socially shared beliefs and assumptions that are carried out by individuals as a whole society (Kostova, 1997:180). Scott (1995) further elaborated that normative components are those that show the way to what is right and most appropriate for an individual or an organisation. Therefore, when institutions such as educational systems and religious or government bodies try to establish behaviour as correct, the institution is said to be acting through normative processes influencing the individual or organisational action.

In this globalized era, organisations find it difficult to strike the perfect balance between local and global HRM practices during their design and implementation in the MNCs. The issue has become quite serious for both local and multinational organisations. MNCs feel the urgency to ensure proper HR practice implementation while in the home country; multicultural employees try to adjust with the cultural differences in designing and executing the HR practices to enhance organisational performance. Therefore, the organisations in the non-western countries can come up with a balance of HR practices that are culturally appropriate and can simultaneously help the organisation compete globally (Budhwar and Debrah, 2013).

Moreover, MNCs face multiple country institutional environments where all of them are subjected to the factors that belong to any of the regulatory, cognitive and normative domains (Westney, 1993). The domain's level of formalisation and their tacitness differ from these three. This implies that the level of explicit codification of the domain and the comfort in the comprehension of the domain to outside or foreign organisations is the main differing point (Kostova and Zaheer, 1999). As such, the regulatory dimension can be mapped with formal institutions such as the regulations that the entire state approves of (North, 1990). The regulatory dimension is most likely straightforward to interpret and understand accurately

because it is formalised in laws and regulations (Gersick, 1991). Examples suggest that a country's intellectual property regime, its justice system and the law enforcement are made according to the specific needs of the country as they come about from the outcomes of governments and local political systems (Kostova and Zaheer, 1999; Gaur et al., 2007).

Meanwhile, normative and cognitive dimensions or also termed as pillars are concerned with informal aspects of institution. This can be connected to the ways in which an actor tends to pursue his aim (Kshetri and Dholakia, 2011; Scott, 1995) or the assumptions and beliefs of an entire society (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). Informal aspects of host country environments may include differences in the levels of corruption, the political systems, the importance of business networks and connections and cultural differences (Gaur et al., 2007). In contrast to the regulatory dimension, the normative dimension is more tacit and part of 'deep structures' of a country (Kostova and Zaheer, 1999:70). Thus, it is more difficult to understand and interpret, particularly for an outsider. This suggests that the normative dimension of a country's institutional environment poses more difficult challenges for MNCs.

Previous empirical studies have shown that the adoption of the HPWS technique is linked to organisational competitiveness in both developed countries like the US (Lawler et al., 1998; Thite et al., 2012) and developing countries, specifically the countries in East and Southeast Asia (Bae and Lawler, 2003). It is fair to state that the most studies were conducted mainly in Western countries; therefore, an interesting question arises whether these findings are applicable to the context of developing countries (Wang et al., 2011; Thite et al., 2012). Despite these arguments, the scholars and practitioners in the field of HPWS have expressed concerns about their effectiveness in different institutional contexts given their western lineage (Muduli et al., 2016; Bello-Pintado, 2015). Researchers in the field have also argued whether HPWS is a suitable practice in developing and emerging countries (Collings, et al., 2010, Sun et al., 2007; Thite et al., 2012).

Rather than assuming that a country's institutional context fits neatly into regulative, cognitive and normative dimensions, our study proposes that in Bangladesh, the majority of institutions develop and legitimize their platforms through their normative influence. The normative dimension of institutional theory, such as national culture, influences not only how people behave but also their attitude towards communication, risk and authority. Differences in cultures are the most widely captured area in international business literature (Demirbag et al., 2007; Rabl et al., 2014). Considerable empirical research suggests that variations in culture may moderate the relationship between HR practices and organisational performance (Evans and Davies, 2005; Martin-Tapia, Aragon-Correa and Guthrie, 2009; Aycan, 2005; Triguero-Sanchez, et al., 2013). The institutional theory also considers the national culture as an important factor in market-entry decisions.

The normative dimension of institutional theory encapsulates culture's definition (Demirbag et al., 2007). As Kostova (1999:315) argues, 'the greater the difference between the normative profiles of the home country and the recipient country, the greater the likelihood that there will be a misfit in transferred practice and the recipient environment.' Scott (1995) further argues that normative components of institutions define what is appropriate and 'right' for a society's members. As such, when an institution (e.g., education system, religion and government) promotes the 'correct' way of behaviour, even in the absence of legal or other sanctions, that institution influences organisational and individual attitudes by a normative process (Trevino et al., 2008). Culture is deeply rooted in the foundation of the institutional environment and in influencing the characteristics of members of the society (North, 1990). Therefore, in order to understand the institutional environment, it is necessary to evaluate the issues of culture, which are connected with it in a significant manner.

3.2.1 Culture

National culture has been defined as the ‘collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another’ (Hofstede, 1984:245). Culture is the distinguishable factor within one group to another that works as the underlying collective programming of the human mind (Hofstede, 2001). Kluckhohn (1951) elaborates culture as a collection of distinguishable factors, as in, the beliefs and customs of a society, its attitudes and behavior, the morals they value, etc. Researchers from Global Leadership and Organisational Behaviour Effectiveness (GLOBE) defined culture as shared values, norms and beliefs that are an outcome of similar experiences of members of collectives that are passed across generations (Moonen, 2017). Among these researchers, Schwartz (2004) stressed on value as a central factor, elaborating on it as that of a structure rich in daily practices, beliefs, norms, values and symbols. He argued that identifying the prevalence among the values within a group of social beings could help identify their cultural ideals which in turn defined the traits that are central to the societal culture. Swidler (1986), on the other hand, used the term toolkit to define culture, defining that it consisted of the worldviews, the stories, symbols and rituals that people of a society performed or practiced for survival or success. Culture is defined also as the means through which social beings can perpetuate, communicate and share the knowledge about their perspective towards life and the world (Geertz, 1973). Culture can be seen through a grounded approach as a result of the extensive theoretical and empirical literature by many researchers (see for example; Schwartz, the Globe, Hofstede).

It has been indicated by a number of SHRM literature that context is the main reason that controls the effect on HRM practices and differentiates between developed and developing countries (Budhwar and Debrah, 2013, Rabl et al., 2014). These factors include differences in the institutions, regulations, collective bargaining, labour force and socio-cultural characteristics of the workplace and society. For example, in Western Europe, collective bargaining is much higher compared to countries like the United States, Canada and Japan. The

labour costs of countries like Eastern Europe, Mexico and China are comparatively cheaper than in countries like Japan, the US, Western Europe and Canada (Gerhart and Fang, 2005). Undoubtedly, the above-mentioned countries differ in their environment, so the MNCs need to adopt HR management practices, which are country specific (Budhwar and Debrah, 2013; Rabl et al., 2014). However, it is evident that international management practices that are observed more clear-cut and readily measured country differences in an environment has received more attention in the academic research arena. In contrast, upon initial observations, the predominant focus in international management studies seem to be less apparent, but the different thoughts and reactions of people in different countries is considered fundamental (Gerhart and Fang, 2005).

Research on MNCs has indicated that the comparative HRM studies have received a generous amount of attention because of culture, as it has an obvious impact on how people behave, how we treat other people, what our children are taught, how we solve problems or manage organisations (Islam, 2004; Aycan, 2005; Triguero-Sanchez et al., 2013). Dowling (1999:10) stated that 'national culture is one of the five moderating variables that either heightens or weakens the differences between global and local HRM practices'. Dowling (1999:12) further stated that since the multinational organisations require people across national boundaries to interact with each other, cultural differences are appreciated, and it is essential to understand when these differences are important.

Multinational organisations tend to conduct their business operations in an international market (Aycan et al., 2007; Kirkman et al., 2006). As a result, domestic firms are often put under pressure to organise branches and subsidiary organisations outside their own country. The consequence of this is employment offers of MNCs provide people of different cultures the opportunity to intermingle. For example, it is evident that lots of organisations have relocated or outsourced elements of the supply chain in order to take advantage of lower labour

costs in other countries. Many organisations' wide range of products and services are now handled by customer service staff in Asian countries. Companies that have set up offshore call centres include HSBC, Barclays, Lloyds TSB, and Prudential, to name a few (Mankin, 2009). With the escalation of cross-border investments by organisations, people from different cultural backgrounds are interacting, and they may be encountering difficulties because of varying mentalities. Mental programmes exercise a prevalent yet concealed influence on behaviour (Hofstede, 1984). Due to the varieties of mind-sets, a number of situations are seen differently by people and similar problems are solved in different ways (Dimba and Rugimbana, 2013).

Hofstede's (1984) research on cultural dimension is widely used by researchers and practitioners in the field of cross-cultural management studies. Culture creates normative pressures for organisations to conform their management practices and cultures to a national model (Rabl et al, 2014). Tara et al., (2010:405) referred to Hofstede's studies as 'ground-breaking' works that have inspired and assisted the huge amount of work on cultural value dimensions. The authors further commented that 'many of the most important and difficult challenges to the conduct of international human resource management stem from the differences encountered in various countries' and MNC's cultures.' Variations in national cultures are reflected in people's values, beliefs and behaviour patterns (Armstrong and Taylor, 2014). However, there has been criticism of Hofstede's (1984) four cultural dimensions (e.g., McSweeney, 2002; Baskerville, 2003). The criticism was mainly about the survey method is not sufficient to measure culture, and only four dimensions are too limited in number. Hofstede (2002) addressed those criticisms by providing evidence that the four dimensions were deeply rooted in cultures and their traits were examined and validated with other external measurements. Later, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) increased the cultural dimension to six and subsided the argument of limited cultural dimension. Research indicates that insignificant numbers of countries' scores are available for the additional dimensions and continued to use

the Hofstede's initial four dimensions (Desender et al., 2011; Ng, and Lim, 2019). Therefore, Hofstede's (1984) four main dimensions, briefly discussed below, can explain the differences in cultural responses:

- **Power distance** is defined as 'the extent to which society accepts the fact that power in institutions and organisations is distributed unequally' (Hofstede, 1984:45). It refers to the degree to which subordinates are not expected to disagree towards their supervisors and supervisors are not expected to discuss any issues with their subordinates in the decision making process (Hofstede, 1984, 2001).
- **Uncertainty avoidance** is the degree to which culture programmes its people to feel either comfortable or uncomfortable in an uncertain situation, ranging from relatively flexible to extremely rigid (Hofstede, 2001).
- **Individualism/collectivism:** *Individualism* represents values in society in which the ties between individuals are loose. This means everyone in a society is expected to look after him or herself including their immediate family members. *Collectivism* stands for a society in which people from birth onward are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people's lifetime continue to protect them in exchange of not questioning loyalty (Hofstede, 2001).
- **Masculinity/Femininity** is the degree to which individuals show masculine behaviours, like heroism and dominance, or feminine values and behaviors, such as openness and interdependence. The surveys that were conducted on the preference of work objectives predict that men put more emphasis on ego goals, such as careers, resources and money, whilst women attach more importance to family, relationships, helping others and the physical environment (Hofstede, 2001).

However, research on multinational MNCs and their implication on HRM practices in the organisation have often come heavily on organisations' high power distance (Ayman, 2005;

Gerhart and Fang, 2005; Ghosh, 2011, Abdullah et al., 2011; Triguero-Sanchez et al., 2013). For the purpose of the current study, the thesis has mainly relied on power distance cultural dimensions to examine their impact on HPWS in the context of Bangladeshi service organisations. Thus, the following section discusses the power distance dimension in detail. (Table 3.1 highlights the cultural features of Bangladesh).

Table 3.1: Cultural features of Bangladeshi society

Cultural Dimension	Bangladeshi Context	Cultural Dimension
Individualism	Collectivist	Collectivism
High Power Distance	Absolute surrender to power, high power distance: due to colonial legacy of hierarchical power structure, differences in family status and inequality in socio-economic conditions of the people	Low Power Distance
High Uncertainty Acceptance	Low risk taking	High Uncertainty Avoidance
High Masculinity	Masculine	High Femininity

Source: Ideas extracted from Abdullah et al., (2011), Hofstede, (2016)

3.2.2 Power distance and HR practices

Power distance refers to the unequal distribution of power in organisations and institutions and the degree to which the given society adheres to this distance. A centralized authority and the level of autocracy in leadership defines the term in case of organisations. A higher extent of power distance, therefore, reflects the organisation as being hierarchical, where the general acceptance is that of the superior having more power and dominance over his subordinates. The HR looks through its own perspective of how this dominance and its implications can be coordinated. Countries such as India, Bangladesh, Philippines and China are prime examples with high power distance culture whilst western countries such as the UK, New Zealand or Sweden share a low power distance culture of a more democratic sort and thus favour a structured organisation (Harris, 2003), which has its own implications on its human capital

including the HR in order to manage and operate properly. When the gap between managers and their employees is little, the employees tend to become more eager in the sharing of knowledge, skills and experiences within this privileged state. MacMillan (2012) presumes how a situation as such can make a significant increase in the overall achievement of the organisational goals versus the societies that encourage a higher degree of power distance (Harris, 2003). So, the argument lies within the context of power that is distributed from the management to employee levels that can, in terms of organisational growth, determine the productivity and performance agenda of the individual employees to enrich competition.

This power distance can reveal a hierarchy in the relationships and is supposedly quite central to the culture of a society, further exposing the extent of the allocation of unequal power in institutional and organisational levels. Features of an organisational structure, such as a central decision-making process and formal norms that are used extensively, define a high power distance in cultures because a chain of command is not monitored when working in a society with low power distance. As Herbig and Dunphy (1998) point out, creativity is essentially ruined through a bureaucratic environment. It also been noticed that the flow of communication across the restrictions that are either functional or for hierarchy happens more smoothly in cultures that do not exhibit power distance (Shane, 1993), enabling a network to form between the ideas and creative thought process, a combination of which can achieve a radical growth in the objectives and competitiveness of the organisation itself.

Cultures on high power distance see differences between superiors and their subordinates as distinct with extensive status differentials (Hofstede, 2001). So, it can be said that the degree of prominence of power distance is directly proportional to the level of acceptance of such inequalities in a society. It represents how much the people are willing to agree to the display of status and power distances among members. Power distance also portrays the level to which employees are likely to submit to the hierarchy and position in the

organisation. This means that the extent to which employees find power distance tolerable will predict the relationship between management and them, and it will define the perception of responsibilities and its maintenance in the organisation (Hofstede, 2001; Islam, 2004; Abdullah et al., 2011). Studies have found that the degree of power distance is lower in the developed countries but in the countries that are developing the influence of power distance remains high (Morris and Pavett, 1992; Islam, 2004; Abdullah et al., 2011; Hofstede, 2016). For example, Bangladesh as a developing country, scores high (score of 80) in Hofstede's Power Distance Index (PDI). It reflects that people accept hierarchical order in which everybody has a place, and it needs no further justification (Hofstede, 2016) (see for example; Table 3.2). Similarly, according to Islam (2004), in high power distance countries like Pakistan, the employees feel dependent on their managers, so they become afraid and uncomfortable in displaying their disagreement with the managers. This notion suggests that high PDI countries prefer centralization in organisational structure and a greater number of hierarchical levels (Hofstede, 2001). However, despite the unequal distributions of power among superiors and subordinates, a certain type of trust and dependency is observed between them in the organisation. Although this trust may not be visible formally, it may be reflected in the employee behaviour and attitude. Santilli (2010) further argued that in high power distance cultures, there is a strong dependency and acceptance of managerial dominance, whilst in low power distance cultural context, there are strong interpersonal relationships and free flowing communication between superiors and subordinate.

Table 3.2: Difference between low power distance and high power distance culture.

Low Power Distance	High Power Distance
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Decentralization▪ Flatter Organisations▪ Employees seek involvement▪ Prefer participative management▪ Superiors and Subordinates Considered equals▪ Accept responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Centralization▪ Taller organisations▪ Accept direction of hierarchy▪ Respect for authority and status▪ Superiors and subordinates not Considered equals▪ Accept discipline

Source: Adopted from Islam, (2004)

Empirical evidence suggests that recruitment, selection, training and development HR practices are important components of HPWS organisations (Bos-Nehles et al., 2013; Schimansky, 2014). However, it depends on the context of culture whether the organisation may prefer internal or external recruitment and selection. Preference on an internal recruitment and promotion is favoured by some cultures with the belief that it guarantees the selection of loyal and committed employees (Budhwar and Khatri, 2001). It is usual for the organisations under the context of a high power distance culture to prefer recruiting internally as it is assumed that doing so maintains their status quo in the society. For example, Turkey was found to be a high power distance culture. Therefore, their recruitment policy is based on an employee suggestion system, employee family backgrounds and other contacts that reflect an autocratic leadership style (Karabat and Calis, 2014). Such societies readily accept inequality and have power differentials in their institutionalization. A study found that in such cases, it can be stressful for the externally recruited employee to cope when the strong social networks in the collectivist cultures support internally recruited employees (Bjorkman and Lu, 1999). Cultures that avoid high uncertainty prefer internal recruitments over external ones to maintain their status quo (Aycan, 2005). In addition to this, the members of a higher status are assumed to maintain their share of power and privilege to their advantage. Compared to this, Hofstede

(1984) demonstrates how the cultures with a low level of power distance assume the belief in minimizing the unequal treatment in privileges and rights.

After recruitment of an employee in the organisation, it is the responsibility of the HR department to develop them by providing appropriate training (Absar et al., 2010). Beardwell and Holden (1998) indicated that to attain and maintain the success of any organisation, the managers should not only recruit employee to fulfil the requirement of the organisation, but they also need to train and develop their employees. It is also important for both new and existing employees (Absar et al., 2010). In the case of a performance-oriented cultural context, there is large budget allocation for employee training and development activities in the organisation (Tsang, 1994, Wilkins, 2001). Wong et al. (2001) suggested that training programmes in Chinese organisations motivate their employees to trust their organisation. With the same belief, the employees reciprocate the favour with the concept of *pao*, which means that a person has to pay back to those who have treated him/her well. Therefore, employees work hard and have an enhanced commitment to the organisation as a reciprocation to the favour.

However, in countries with a high power distance, the selection of participants for training and development programmes is done with some selective criteria other than the performance or need of the employee. For example, the selection for training programmes depends on the good connection and relationship between superiors and managers (i.e., overseas training opportunities) (Aycan, 2005). In addition, in high power distance, training programmes for employees are decided by the authoritative managers in a paternal way (Wilkins, 2001). Whereas, in low power distance cultures, training needs are identified and decided upon the discretion of both employee and his/her manager. Similarly, HPWS components that enhance motivation in employees, i.e., pay for performance, are more effective and fairer in countries with low power distance (Hofstede, 2001; Peretz and Fried,

2012). The result of this is an inversely proportional relationship between the degree of a country's power distance and the strength of the HPWS-performance.

Subordinates who are dependent on their superior will most likely prefer an autocratic/paternalistic manager. For instance, an autocratic managerial style is compatible with higher power distance and with high power distance index (PDI) score countries, i.e., Far Eastern, Arab, Latin countries and Southeast Asian countries including Bangladesh. On the contrary, a low PDI country prefers less centralization in organisational structure. It is evident that there is contractual relationship between superiors and subordinates among low-scoring PDI countries like the UK, the USA, Norway, Finland Denmark and Sweden (Islam, 2004). In high power distance cultures, the distribution of power, authority and information remains unequal, so the subordinates develop a tendency to respect and follow the commands of the authoritative superiors. The titles and position of an organisation have a significant meaning to the subordinates. Generally, the display of hierarchy remains stiff and institutionalised (Hofstede, 2001; Islam, 2004; Peretz and Fried, 2012) and the advancement in a career or a promotion of rank depends on factors such as seniority, social standards, high level family connections or political backgrounds but almost never on the work performance (Sturman et al., 2012). For example, in the state-owned enterprises of China, the promotions are decided upon the level of seniority rather than employee performance (Chow, 2004).

The problem with a standard form of HR practices, such as performance appraisals, aggravates at a cross-cultural level, as 'good performance' varies from one culture to another. With countries where the cultural practice is oriented with high performance and low power distance, employees' performance is evaluated once or twice annually through a standard form of objective evaluation by multiple sources. Whereas, countries that practice high power distance, high collectivity and low performance culturally evaluate employees in an unsystematic way. A top-down method is undertaken where the superiors are assumed to take

the role of an evaluator based on the opinions about the individual employee from other managers (Aycan, 2005). For example, in the case of Taiwan, performance appraisals are not of much importance and receive no particular attention (Chow, 2004). A number of organisations in Taiwan have been conducting performance appraisals frequently, just for the purpose of HR documentation. Under such a display of power distance in their culture, it is unusual for employees to confront managers with feedback or to share their views openly. In countries with a low degree of power distance and a high degree of participation, a 360-degree performance appraisal is usually preferred with a form of multi-source feedback (Fletcher and Perry, 2002). This method of 360-degree performance appraisal is common in countries such as the United States. But this is an unbelievable scenario in high power distance cultures, where it is assumed that feedback from employees means they are underestimating their superiors. In high power distance cultures, the process of performance appraisal is usually top-down and one-sided (Gregersen et al., 1996). Chow (2004) asserts in China, employees feel demoralised and threatened by negative feedback, and it creates tension among employees. So, the processes of performance appraisal have become part of formalities to satisfy and save both ends. In addition, performance appraisal is not necessarily related to pay, which contradicts universal HPWS practices.

Organisations with a strong display of power distance usually have the managers on an authoritative role with a formal control over all employees who follow every command without question (Bochner and Hesketh, 1994). With such a relationship between managers and employees, it is natural for their relation to be too formal. And with such differences in personalities, it is undeniable that the manager's attitude becomes paternalistic and the employees develop polarized opinions, which can be either extremely positive or negative towards the manager. Researchers, such as Schramm-Nielsen (2000) and Triguero-Sánchez et al. (2013), suggested that a work culture that is team-oriented diminishes power distance to an

extent and can develop a greater degree of commitment in the employees and the employees are more likely to keep on working for the company.

Moreover, organisations with a high degree of power distance have their resources and information restricted to only a few people. This strengthens and runs hierarchy, which makes it complicated to have a wide range of employees involved in decision-making processes, and it also makes the judgement of promotion and pay according to performance very difficult. According to HRM context, compensation is one of the important motivation-enhancing practices (Bos-Nehless et al., 2013; Schimansky, 2014). However, power distance can play a moderating effect on an organisation's compensation and reward policies (Aycan, 2005; Abdullah et al., 2011). Unlike the low power distance cultures, in a high power distance cultural context, compensation is based on subjective measures taken by managers who have authority to make differential salaries or performance-based rewards for the employees who are working in the same job (Mendoca and Kanungo, 1994; Abdullah et al., 2011). Ployhart and Moliterno (2011) emphasize that the absence of the use of employee abilities and skills, and not rewarding them accordingly, demotivates employees in the organisation so they cannot generate performance. Also, these reasons strongly oppose a work environment with a high degree of power distance as it does not provide a setting where HPWS can function well (Rabl et al., 2014).

In comparison to this, in a work culture with a low display of power distance, the employees are more involved in decision making by sharing information and their skills, and performance plays a big role in compensation. Countries with no hierarchical systems and a lack of power distance encourage a decision-making attitude and clear communication between subordinates and superiors, which results in an improvement in their performance. The absence of power distance also provides a solid ground for an investment through training and development activities for the entire workforce (Aycan, 2005, Peretz and Fried, 2012). Unlike

high PDI countries, employee seniority, or having good connections with the managers, plays a much smaller role than having the right abilities and projecting good performance. The effectiveness of HPWS components, such as the performance-based pay to directly enhance motivation, is found more in countries having a lower degree of power distance (Newman and Nollen, 1996; Aycan, 2005). Therefore, it can be implied that the degree of power distance is inversely related to employee motivation, which in turn negatively impacts employee performance in the organisation.

It was evident that the Koreans have a special system called *yon-go*, which roughly translates to special social relationship or connection, where the managers of an organisation emphasize family and academic backgrounds, place of birth and the social status of the applicants (Aycan, 2005). In addition, the entry-level jobs are limited to a certain age so that any disagreement or conflict can be prevented between the employees and managers (Lee, 1998). It is generally assumed that in the case of employees being older than their superiors, they are more likely to be disrespectful to their managers and it will be difficult for the superiors to enforce their authority over the employees. Thus continues the prevalence of age-based hierarchy and status in Korea (Lee, 1998; Aycan, 2005).

HPWS practices, such as communication and information sharing, encourage all employees to feel like valued members in their respective organisations (Pfeffer, 1998). In addition, fewer status differences between manager and employees is a prerequisite for the successful implementation of high-performance practices. This means that the equal treatment of all employees will lead to fewer hierarchical differences among employees and managers (Ahmed and Allen, 2015). However, Islam (2004) found that high power distance culture often encourages nepotism and centralization, which is likely to limit HPWS practices. Also, it is evident that high power distance cultural values in organisation may push managers to favour some groups over others. Organisational openness can be achieved when information is shared

on both the organisational and individual level. As a result, employee trust and loyalty becomes enhanced, which in turn results in enhanced employee performance and motivation (Pfeffer, 1998; Islam, 2004).

However, the dissemination of information is not widespread in high PD culture in the organisation, but it is usual in cultures with low power distance. In high power distance cultures, organisations' top managers are not comfortable to share important information with their subordinates because they think, with more information, employees can become more powerful and managers may lose control of them (Pfeffer, 1998). For example, in Bangladesh, leadership is mostly autocratic (Miah et al., 2001; Prince, 2011). Therefore, employees too have accepted the fact that the degree of transparency in the flow of communication and information will be limited and their managers will not share all the information with them (Abdullah et al., 2011). Several studies indicated that managers in Bangladesh were philosophically against taking initiatives of subordinates (Miah et al., 2001; Prince, 2011; Abdullah et al., 2011; Choudhury and Mahmood, 2012). For example, the communication between superior and subordinates are mainly based on work-related issues. Therefore, the relationship among subordinates and superiors is more formal than friendly (Miah et al., 2001; Prince, 2011). Similarly, Sinha and Tripathi (1994) found power distance cultural dimension promotes autocratic and hierarchical decision-making in Indian culture as well. Negandhi and Prasad (1971:128) captured power distance in India and quote, 'What is most important for me and my department is not what I do or achieve for the company, but whether the master's favour is bestowed on me. This I have achieved by saying yes to everything the master says and does. To contradict him is to look for another job.'

Khatri (2009) asserts that employees in high power distance culture are unwilling to participate in communication and information sharing among colleagues and superiors and prefer superiors making decisions for them and giving them guidelines to follow submissively.

In addition, research found that employees are generally afraid to question their superiors in high power distance countries (Hofstede, 2001; Islam, 2004; Aycan, 2005, Ghosh, 2011). The superior management of such countries who encourage a participative behaviour in employees are generally looked upon as incompetent and weak (Ghosh, 2011; Aycan, 2005). But in countries with a low degree of power distance, the ability to participate in decision-making by a transparent communication system in practice becomes an important factor. For example, in the United States, organisations differ from those in high power distance cultures as they encourage more employee participation by sharing information among employees at any level and are considered more efficient (Ghosh, 2011).

However, there are different scenarios observed in a Japanese cultural context. Japan has a hierarchically structured society like India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Ghosh (2011) asserts that although the manager and subordinate relationship is profound in Japanese organisations, on the top of it, the hierarchy reflects a kind and fatherly manager who ensures employees' collective welfare and development. For this reason, in Japan, when a new employee begins working in an organisation, they usually never think of competing with their seniors (Khare, 1999). Their tendencies to pursue their personal goals are stopped by the respect and gratitude towards their superiors. Perhaps this could be the reason for their harmonious relationships with less conflict between superiors and subordinates in Japanese organisations unlike in Indian and Bangladeshi cultures.

As discussed in this section, power distance in the cultural dimension emphasized a centralised decision-making process in the organisation by top-ranking executives and powerful bureaucrats (Pillay, 2008), which may negatively impact employee performance in the organisation. Hofstede's (2001) research opined that bureaucrats from such groups were mostly biased and often made judgements on people on the basis of nepotism and favouritism due to an unethical power distribution in the society. As such, high power distance societies

discourage subordinates from questioning top-level executives (Khare, 1999; Pillay, 2008, Abdullah et al., 2011). Therefore, the focus in the next section is on nepotism and favouritism in a high power distance cultural dimension, which influences HR practices in the organisation.

3.2.3 Nepotism and Favouritism

Different forms of preferential treatment can be observed in the relationship between the organisation and the benefitted individuals, but the privileged treatment can be divided into three common traits: nepotism, favouritism and cronyism. The first of the traits of preferential treatment is nepotism, which refers to favouring family members regarding the misuse of the office. The word *favouritism* means the general inclination to favour one person or group over others and to give preferential treatment to those whom one has personal connections, for example, friends, relatives, neighbours or other acquaintances (Loewe et al., 2007). The third type of preferential treatment is cronyism, a term that has its origins from the undergraduates at the University of Cambridge in the 17th century and is slang for *close friends* (Khatri and Tsang, 2003). It is the kind of preferential treatment for long-time friends, completely disregarding whether they have the right qualifications such as skills, competence and success (Arasli and Tumer, 2008). However, this research is going to focus on the concept of nepotism and favouritism in the organisation, which are discussed in detail in the following sections.

a) Nepotism

Abdalla et al. (1998) defined that nepotism is derived from the Latin word *nepot* (nephew). According to the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, nepotism is ‘the practice of favouring one’s relatives when one has power or a high office, especially giving them positions because of their relationship rather than their merit’ (Gerrit, 2013). To be more precise, nepotism is a conflict of interest (Arasli et al., 2006). Nepotism means preferences are given to those candidates who are blood-related to the hiring authority, but it is not always compulsory. It means that relationships, such as friendship, belonging from the same background or known

via other relations, are given priorities regardless of their competency, talents or skills. These nepotist tendencies towards certain candidates not only effect the employee performance but also negatively influence organisational performance. Nepotism not only negatively impacts employee hiring or selecting for training and development practices, but it is also involved in firing employees due to negative words of mouth (Ozler and Buyukarslan, 2011; Nadeem et al., 2015). When nepotism is high in an organisation, employees cannot perform well as they become demotivated, which negatively influences their work performance. Also, when promoting an employee not because of his/her merit but because of his/her kinship with the top-level managers, such relationship is categorised as nepotism (Ozler and Buyukarslan, 2011). However, nepotism is observed mostly in underdeveloped countries and in societies in which relations and traditional ties are very strong (Aktan, 2001).

b) Favouritism

The term *favouritism* refers to the contribution of special privileges to the network of people who are close to you in your career and personal lives (Arasli and Tumer, 2008). Favouritism is when someone favours someone who is not a competent person but because he/she is chosen for personal biasness (Kwon, 2005) or personal involvement (Ozler et al., 2007). Favouritism is a very common phenomenon observed in organisations, and it is usual everywhere (Nadeem et al., 2015). However, Ponzo and Scopa (2010) opined that favouritism positively related to hiring practices in the organisation because it reduces costs to advertise job openings. Therefore, favouritism is not an illegal practice. However, recruitment should be based on employees' talent and skills so that the efficiency and performance of the organisation can be enhanced (Nadeem et al., 2015).

According to the political decision-making process, the phenomenon of preferential treatment is considered a 'form of corruption' (Kayabasi, 2005:56). Oktay (1983:209) defines preferential treatment as 'the state of prevalence of specific criteria, such as attendance to the

same school, being from same place or similar political tendency, in the relations in organisational units or in the relations between these units and social environment thus replacing universal criteria governing the management studies.'

c) Cronyism

Khatri and Tsang (2003) defined cronyism as one kind of favouritism where an organisation wants to hire a pool of employees who can be dominated by the management. Therefore, there will be no conflicts within the organisation. Cronyism in an organisation leads to a decreased level of employee efficiency and performance because employees are not hired because of their qualifications and skills but on the basis of personal relationships with the management (Nadeem et al., 2015). Cronyism and favouritism are hard to control in cultures that put high emphasis on interpersonal relations, especially to cronies (long-standing close friends) (Arasli and Tumer, 2008).

Nepotism and favouritism are very common behaviours in business organisations. The issue of nepotism has an impact not only for management development, promotion and the public relations of an organisation, but also for executives who have family or friends in management positions. Intensive preferential treatment in the organisations and in the human resource practices fail to carry out its activities. Therefore, in most of the literature, nepotism has been criticized mostly as being unprofessional behaviour (Aycan, 2005; Arasli et al., 2006; Bute, 2011, Nadeem et al., 2015; Safina, 2015; Shabbir and Siddique, 2017). It is evident that even though developed countries have taken legal measures in order to prevent the adoption of nepotism, the developing countries continue to suffer, as such practices persist in their everyday lives (Boadi, 2000; Bute, 2011).

Some researchers believe nepotism is diminishing in the face of globalisation. On the other hand, other researchers believe that nepotism still runs in the veins of developed and

developing world (Hagen and Amin, 1994; Abdallah et al., 1998). Written documentation regarding nepotism is considerably low despite that fact that it has been the means of recruitment, either formal or informal, for as long as organisations and enterprises have existed (Padgett and Morris, 2005). Bute (2009) asserts that in heavily nepotism-influenced businesses, HR practices cannot work independently. Due to nepotism and bias, the employee may not be motivated to stay in the organisation, and this can directly affect job satisfaction, organisational commitment and individual performance. For example, such an environment makes the promotion of qualified employees difficult when their competitors have relatives or friends in the high-level management of the organisation (Hayajenh et al., 1994). In addition, because of this unfair treatment, it can also have effects on behavioural intentions of employees such as quitting intension and negative word of mouth (Arasli et al., 2006; Arasli and Tumer, 2008).

Empirical research has indicated, the practice of nepotism has existed for many years in Arab countries and in third-world countries (Abdallah et al., 1998). According to the literature review, nepotism can only work when the business is a family-owned small organisation so that dedicated employees can be identified easily. In addition, nepotism also encourages a positive environment for a family-oriented business as it increases determination and job satisfaction for all employees whether they are relatives or not (Hayajenh et al., 1994; Abdallah et al., 1998). Slack (2001) opined that an approximation of 40 percent of Fortune 500 firms are family-owned and together they account for about 50 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP). More importantly, studies found that on a variety of other performance measures, family-run businesses performed better than non-family-run organisations. These organisations have to practice nepotism so they can remain 'in the family.' Therefore, the accomplishment of a family-run organisation is an indirect validation for nepotism practices during the employee recruitment process (Padgett and Morris, 2005; Slack, 2001).

Empirical research suggests that nepotism and favouritism in the workplace negatively affect HR practices in the organisation (Boadi, 2000; Arasli and Tumer, 2008; Pipidi, 2002; Karabat and Calis, 2014; Shabbir and Siddique, 2017; Uysal, 2019). For example, Arasli and Tumer (2008) examined the impact of nepotism, favouritism and cronyism on employees' job stress, job satisfaction, intention to quit and word-of-mouth comments. The survey was carried out by 576 participants from the service industry in Northern Cyprus. The result indicated that nepotism, favouritism and cronyism increased employee dissatisfaction and job stress in the organisation. Nadeem et al. (2015) found that nepotism, favouritism and cronyism were negatively associated with employee job satisfaction in the telecom sector of Pakistan. Similarly, Uysal (2019) found that organisations' recruitment practices were based on family background, personal contacts and suggestion systems rather than candidates' skills and abilities in Turkey. Pippidi (2003) added that in high power distance countries, for example in South Africa, public officials are comfortable to receive and give bribes in order to get things done. In addition, non-monetary favour is also accepted if the person is from a higher social status in ground of favouritism. Likewise, Bute (2009) found that favouritism-based compensation demotivates employees. The author also added that working under incompetent managers who are recruited regardless of their qualifications and skills leads to employee job stress, dissatisfaction and lower organisational commitment. Shabbir and Siddique (2017) carried out a study with 164 employees from randomly selected organisations in Pakistan. The findings suggest that nepotism, favouritism and cronyism negatively impact organisational performance and decrease employee productivity.

It is often observed that candidates may not have relevant skills or qualifications to meet job requirements. However, due to relatives, friends or other family connections, the candidate got a job in the organisation. Since those candidates do not have adequate or relevant skills, they cannot perform well in the job, and this negatively impacts organisational fairness

and performance. Dissatisfaction arises between co-workers who are already on the job and the newly recruited employee who has been hired through references or family relationships. Due to nepotism and favouritism practices in the organisation, HR practices such as unfair compensation and benefits and unfair promotions may negatively affect employee motivation and performance. These unfair practices often lead employees to quit their job and say negative comments about the organisation to clients, colleagues, friends and others which may severely harm the organisation's image (Arasli and Tumer, 2008; Bute, 2009; Ozler and Bukyukarslan, 2011).

The recruitment and selection practices in MNCs' subsidiaries are different among countries (Harris et al., 2003). For example, a study conducted by Chow (2004) utilizes the framework of institutional theory to examine HR practices in China, Taiwan and Hong Kong. The study revealed that in the context of China and Taiwan, nepotism plays a significant role in recruitment and selection, and it is a common practice to appoint relatives and family members to top managerial positions. Moreover, employee referral is also a common practice in the recruitment of lower-level jobs. Large business organisations also consider the recommendations from their existing employees. Similar incidences in Taiwan suggest that hiring through personal connections is also a common phenomenon. The potential loyalty of the employee becomes more important to the manager than his/her true competency for the job. Given the importance of *Guanxi* in Chinese culture, it is important for Chinese and Taiwanese organisations to have the right connections in the high-ups. On the contrary, relationships or connections are not as important in the Hong Kong context (Chow, 2004).

Other, studies reported HR practices in the public sector organisations in high power distance culture are influenced by nepotism, favouritism and high political interventions (Pillay, 2008; Chowdhury and Mahmood, 2012). The institutional environment of the host country can be considered a political hazard as MNCs have to adopt new judicial and political

systems in a new country. Therefore, the state forces the organisations through its coercive powers to behave according to the requirements of the new regulative and political environment (Demirbag et al., 2007). For instance, Chowdhury and Mahmood (2012) highlight that local political pressure, nepotism and preferential treatment heavily influence the MNCs' HRM practices in Bangladesh. In addition, the non-managerial employees were more concerned with management decisions and feared biased and unfair pay structure. The study asserts that differentiated pay practices of managerial and non-managerial employees in the studied organisations have deeply rooted in stratification of educational qualification and social status. A case study conducted by Mahmood (2004) asserts that multinational pharmaceutical companies give particular emphasis on English language proficiency during the recruitment process in Bangladesh. The study also found that the MNCs circulate their recruitment advertisement in English newspaper and conduct selection tests in the English language. As a result, applicants belong to the middle classes and those attending general public schools cannot compete with graduates from English-speaking countries who usually come from wealthy and highly educated family backgrounds and attend selective educational institutions in Bangladesh or other foreign universities.

Another study found that a favouritism-based pay system demoralises employees, making them detached from the organisation (Bute, 2009). The climate of unfair competition arising from nepotism adversely affects employee performance and prompts the intention to resign (Arasli et al., 2006). Besides, nepotism and favouritism practices based on kinship tend to cause conflicts within the family, loss of organisational commitment and job turnover intentions amongst qualified managers. Working under line managers, who are appointed regardless of their educational background, skills and abilities, leads to a lack of confidence and trust in the employees who are not family members; therefore, trust in management, job satisfaction, performance and organisational commitment decreases gradually (Ates, 2005).

The above discussion and literature review lead to an overall understanding that nepotism and favouritism paralyses human resource practices and affects the level of job satisfaction and organisational commitment among employees, which in turn negatively influences performance.

However, in contrast to that, several studies supported nepotism and favouritism as an appropriate way to attract and retain a comparatively inexpensive, trustworthy and committed workforce in an organisation (Holland and Boulton, 1984; Lentz and Leband, 1989; Lutz, 1992, Khatri and Tsang, 2003; Sadozai et al., 2012; Nadeem et al., 2015). For example, Sadozai et al. (2012) conducted a study by using a survey method to examine nepotism and favouritism on job satisfaction and positive relationships in public sector organisations in Pakistan. The findings suggested that Pakistan, being a high power distance culture, had a general acceptance of nepotism and favouritism. This is because in less developed countries and in high PD cultural contexts, people do not take such behaviour too seriously or accept such unfair treatment without resistance. Similarly, Nadeem et al. (2015) examined telecom sector in Pakistan and distributed 300 questionnaires among four organisations. They found that favouritism was positively associated with employee job satisfaction because friends, family members and personal relations who got jobs in the organisation worked very hard and also positively motivated other employees to improve their performance. Holland and Boulton (1984) argued that a new organisation might not be able to hire managers to control sophisticated HRM practices, such as compensation, recruitment and performance appraisal practices. Distant relatives or members of the family are comparatively cheap and available for the newly established firm to keep on moving. In a similar vein, some researchers argued that nepotism tends to be more visible in family-owned, relatively smaller firms in underdeveloped countries (Arasli and Tumer; 2006; Ozler and Buyukarslan, 2011). In particular, family-owned businesses think their next generation will carry out the business operations in the future and

therefore they will be aware of the organisations' goal better than anyone else. So, it is believed that recruiting family members in the management positions will stabilise the organisational activity by avoiding conflicts of interest between management and employees (Aktan, 2001; Ozler and Buyukarslan, 2011). However, the discussion and criticism surrounding nepotism and favouritism indicated that those practices were widespread, and sometimes in favour of an employee but they mostly negatively affected the employee more than anyone else. The lack of employee confidence that appears in such circumstances negatively affects HPWS practices, employee job satisfaction, commitment towards their organisation, and trust in management, which all leads to decreased employee performance. Unfortunately, there is only a limited amount of literature, on the both national and international level, on the practices of power distance cultural dimension which often leads to nepotism and favouritism in the organisation. These reasons increase the urgency for the exploration of this topic, which is known but is rarely examined.

Wu and Chaturvedi (2009) conducted a study and examined the role of procedural justice and power distance in the relationship between HPWS and employee attitudes based on a sample size of 1383 respondents across three countries. The result showed that procedural justice mediates the relationship between HPWS and employee attitudes and power distance moderates this relationship. Gaur et al., (2010) examined how a host country's institutional environment influenced subsidiary staffing strategies. The study addressed the determinants of PCN (parent country national) staffing and the impact of this staffing on MNCs' performance grounded by normative components of institutional theory. The study conducted multiple regression analyses based on 12,997 MNCs of 2,952 Japanese firms in 48 countries. The results indicated that the positive impact of expatriate staffing levels on MNCs' performance depends on the institutional distance between home country and host country.

Triguero-Sanchez et al. (2013) investigated the moderator role of power distance in the relationship between HRM practices and organisational performance. These relationships were examined through an empirical study of 102 small-medium businesses from Spain. The study was conducted by partial least squares structural equation modelling to test the moderator effect of power distance. The finding showed the power distance in the cultural dimension, which moderated the relationship between HRM practices and organisational performance. Hauff et al., (2014) further confirmed in their empirical analysis that the power distance as its moderating role is strongly dependent on the cultural concepts utilised.

Within the scope of new institutional theory, Chowdhury and Mahmood (2012) used a societal effect (S-E) approach to examine the presence of different degrees of impact on specific human resource practices such as recruitment and selection, training and development, pay and performance appraisal, and industrial relationships of four multinational subsidiaries in Bangladesh. The qualitative findings showed that the effect of societal impact (i.e., host country practices) was high in pay and performance appraisal and industrial relationships whilst training and development were observed to be low.

In light of the above literature review, our study has considered this significant determinant of normative dimension of institutional context as a major role in the relationship between HPWS and employee performance. Therefore, the present study emphasises the power distance, nepotism and favouritism as the moderating role of HPWS practices and employee performance. First, it was evident that high power distance cultural orientations affect individual HR practices. In societies with high PD, an uneven distribution of power is likely to be challenged by the HPWS because it discourages subordinates from questioning the authorities (Park et al., 2003; Pillay, 2008). Second, the centralised decision making by top-level managers decisions are often biased and therefore prone to nepotism and favouritism. Therefore, it can be argued that nepotism and favouritism in the power distance cultural context

most likely affects the strength of HR practices and employee performance. On the basis of these arguments, the following hypothesis is proposed.

Hypothesis 2: Institutional context (power distance, nepotism and favouritism) will moderate the relationship between HPWS practices and employee performance.

3.3 Employees' Attitudes in the HPWS Workplace

As discussed in the previous sections, whilst extensive research exists that HPWS has a positive impact on an organisation's performance, there is a lack of understanding of how this influence occurs (Wu and Chaturvedi, 2009; Mansour et al., 2014; Muduli et al., 2016). One of the main challenges within the area HPWS research has been in understanding the mechanisms by which HR practices contribute to the performance of the organisation (Wu and Chaturvedi, 2009; Muduli et al., 2016). Although there have been many attempts in the previous study to unlock the so-called black box between HPWS and firm performance, this issue still remains unsettled (Messersmith et al., 2011; Mansour et al., 2013; Muduli et al., 2016). One possible reason could be prior HPWS studies mainly focused on organisation-level analysis. However, it was evident in a number of studies that it is necessary to understand the effects of HR practices on individuals, as employees are considered an important factor through which HPWS affects employee attitudes, which in turn influences employee outcomes as well as organisational performance (Appelbaum et al., 2000; Evans and Davis, 2005; Wu and Chaturvedi, 2009; Messersmith et al., 2011; Lee and Lee, 2015).

Employees' attitudes can be described as their feelings and beliefs towards their work. Also, it is about negative or positive feelings about something (Greenberg and Baron, 1995). Work attitudes are important for employees because it matters to employees' identity, wellbeing and outlook on their lives (Judge et al., 2012). Attitude may affect employees' behaviour on the job and thus, it is an important element in the organisation. There is a significant relationship between employee attitude and organisational performance (Rayton,

2006; Mahmood et al., 2017). HR practices and policies also have great impact on employee attitudes. Research claims that organisations can achieve maximum benefits from employees by motivating them towards their workplace and by encouraging them towards a positive attitude (Mahmood et al., 2017).

Studies indicated that HR practices are perceived to be valued by employees when they have learning opportunities, an above-market pay structure, decision-making power, experience of higher job satisfaction and increased level of organisational commitment, which leads to the higher level of organisational performance (Allen et al., 2003; Riaz, 2016). Therefore, it can be argued these employee outcomes positively mediate the relationships between HPWS and organisational performance (Zhang and Morris, 2014). In addition, evidence from past research suggests there was not a strong association between HPWS and organisational outcomes, especially in the context of performance and market share in Asian countries (Chow 2003; Tsai, 2006; Wang et al., 2011; Wang and Xu, 2017). This is perhaps one aspect where the performance link has been widely overlooked with respect to the relationship between HPWS and organisational outcome by ignoring potential intervening variables. These variables include understanding work behaviour and employee positive attitudes that influence organisational performance (Tsai, 2006; Chow, 2003). Employee attitude has a long-standing theoretical platform in SHRM research (Wu and Chaturvedi, 2009; Messersmith et al, 2011; Judge et al., 2012; Muduli et al., 2016). It is evident from past studies that the majority of HPWS research studied the direct relationship between HPWS and organisational performance, and it is still lacking to pinpoint the theoretical underpinning (Wu and Chaturvedi, 2009; Messersmith et al., 2011; Muduli et al., 2016). Empirical evidence suggests that the relationship between HPWS and organisational performance is mediated by employee attitudinal variables. The last decade witnessed a number of studies addressing the black box problem through several attitudinal mechanisms, such as job satisfaction (Guest,

1999), procedural justice (Wu and Chaturvedi, 2009), organisational commitment (Kehoe and Wright, 2013), employee engagement (Muduli et al., 2015), and trust (Alfes et al., 2012). For example, Wu and Chaturvedi (2009) examined the role of procedural justice and power distance in the relationship between HPWS and employee attitudes based on a sample size of 1383 respondents across three countries. The result showed that procedural justice mediates the relationship between HPWS and employee attitudes and power distance moderates this relationship. Similarly, a study on employee attitudes of US organisations in relation with high-performance HR practices was performed by Kehoe and Wright (2013). It was found that the extent to which employees perceived high-performance HR practices revealed a significant and positive relationship with affective commitment, which acted as a strong mediator in their intention to keep working with the organisation and their organisational citizenship behaviour. Another study by Muduli et al., (2015) surveyed 600 executives in the Indian banking industry. They found a strong relationship between HPWS and organisational performance. The result of the study also indicated that employee engagement acts as a mediating variable between HPWS and organisational performance.

The HRM policies and practices are intended to apply in the organisational level to enhance employee and organisational performance. As a result, these policies and practices shape employee perception, which influences outcomes by affecting the way they feel or behave (Purcell and Kinnie, 2007). Arthur (1994) assert that HPWS is about shaping employee behaviour and attitude by developing psychological links between organisational and individual goals to increase effectiveness and productivity. For instance, a study has found that HPWS directly relates to employee attitudes of affective commitment and job satisfaction (Wu and Chaturvedi, 2009). Further to this, a study conducted by Macky and Boxall (2007) implied that the effects of HPWS had positive outcomes for both the employees and their employers by conducting a study that formed a positive connection between HPWS practices and

employee attitudinal variables such as job satisfaction, trust in management and organisational commitment. Similarly, a recent empirical study on employee job satisfaction showed that communication between employer and employees, a learning environment, and trust in management play a significant role in developing employee satisfaction levels in the service industry (Uddin et al., 2016).

On the contrary, a case study in the service sector revealed that affective commitment does not positively predict employee performance. The study revealed that implementing inappropriate HR practices may lead to undesirable retention of a genuinely committed workforce incapable to get other job offers or low affective commitment and retention rate of high-performing employees (Khan, 2015). These findings are also consistent with the general belief that HRM practices have a direct effect on employee attitudes (Lawler, 1986; Applebaum et al., 2000; Chang, 2005). Various potential attitudes might be influenced by HPWS, but the purpose of this thesis is to focus on the cluster of important employee attitudes: job satisfaction, affective commitment (Takeuchi et al., 2007) and trust in management (Macky and Boxall, 2007). According to Macky and Boxall (2007), these are the most important mediating variables within the black box of organisational management. It should be noted that none of the existing literature has tested the mediating effects of all three attitudinal outcomes in a non-western context to link HPWS practices to employee performance. However, recent study conducted by Ananthram et al., (2018) investigated the direct and mediation effects between HPWS and employee attitudinal variables in non-western contexts. The study employed 250 survey data from five call centres in India. The findings suggest that Indian call centres might be benefitted by adopting HPWS since the study contributes positively towards the job satisfaction, employee engagement and wellbeing of employees. Further to this, evidence suggests that non-western context HPWS research is somewhat rare. Even so, HPWS studies from western contexts have shown contradictory results. For example, studies conducted in

western contexts have failed to show positive mediating effects of commitment, more specifically a link between commitment and employee performance (Boxall, Ang and Bartram, 2011). Therefore, it transpires that higher commitment does not necessarily lead to higher performance. Contradictory results coming from similar contexts re-assure the importance of examining a greater number of diverse contextual settings to deepen the knowledge of the HR black box through which HPWS links to individual employee performance. It is most likely that variables will interact differently in a complex non-western context like Bangladesh. From the above literature review, it is evident that employee attitudes mediate the relationship between HPWS and employee performance. The above evidence leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: The relationship between HPWS practices and employee performance is mediated by employee attitude.

The next section focuses on the specific relationship between employee attitudinal variables such as job satisfaction, affective commitment and trust in management.

3.3.1 Job Satisfaction

According to researchers Vilela et al., (2008), job satisfaction can be considered as one of those work-related aftermaths of organisational research that are studied most intensively. From the perspective of both practitioners and researchers, among all employee attitudes, job satisfaction can be considered as the major one (Saari and Judge, 2004). Mudor and Tooksoon (2011) claim that job satisfaction can be worked out and defined in different ways by different researchers. But among them, Locke (1976:1304) provides the most popular definition by saying that job satisfaction is what an individual employee feels, as a positive and pleasurable outcome, after the appraisal or experience of a job (Saari and Judge, 2004). In recent times, a definition similar to the previous one had been given by Judge et al., (2012:347), as they explained job satisfaction as a state that is both evaluative and positive that regards the contentment one feels about one's job. According to Robbins (1998), job satisfaction is the commonly reserved

attitude of a working individual towards his/her work, whereas Spector (1997) had previously stated how the level of liking or disliking a person reserves for his or her work can be termed as job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction can also be categorized as employee satisfaction. Even with this easy literal meaning, the feeling of job satisfaction itself results from psychological responses of multiple dimensions. One example has been given by Locke (1976) that an employee may develop positive responses for the job when he/she receives a fair performance appraisal. Therefore, the individual develops contentment for the job and enjoys doing it (Spector, 1997). A combination of cognitive, behavioral and emotional factors results in the job satisfaction of employees (Hulin and Judge, 2003). So, to sum it up, job satisfaction refers to how an individual feel about their workplace, work and the various aspects of it (Spector, 1997; Fey et al., 2009). As Robbins claims (1998), a satisfied employee will bear positive feelings in contrast to a dissatisfied employee, who will bear negative feelings regarding the job.

A further implication is that if enthusiasm and joy of working is generated in employees, they are led to definite recognition, promotion in their job and feeling fulfilled with their job (Kaliski, 2009). Another researcher, Statt (2004), suggests that employees receive an innate motivation in their job as a reward of job satisfaction and contentment. Therefore, Armstrong (2009) categorizes job satisfaction as the favourable feelings and positive attitudes of an employee towards their work, and job dissatisfaction as the unfavourable feelings and negative attitudes. George and Jones (2008) suggest that a collection of beliefs, feelings and work attitudes constitute the term job satisfaction. Therefore, job satisfaction can be deemed rather complex and multidimensional, varying with different meanings from people to people (Mullins and Lineham, 2006).

According to Spector (1997) the study of job satisfaction can be approached with two different methods by researchers. The first method has a global point of view with an overall

focus on job satisfaction, whilst the second method looks more closely at different aspects such as the compensation system, management of the organisation and colleagues in the workplace. The second method is a complicated one when it comes to differentiating between the features that determine job satisfaction and the concept of job satisfaction itself (Vandenabeele, 2013). Therefore, showing consistency with prior researchers (Gould-Williams and Mohamed, 2010; Messersmith et al., 2011) of the sector of HRM, the present study will embrace a global, overall point of view on job satisfaction, just as Locke (1976) and Spector (1997) had advocated. Furthermore, the feeling of job satisfaction is dependent on a number of factors, such as personal antecedent and environmental antecedents (Spector, 1997). Personal antecedents are comprised of aspects like motivation, gender and individual characteristics. Environmental antecedents include organisational factors like organisational role, supervision and work-life balance. However, in this study, the researcher focuses on influences of HPWS, which is a major determinant of organisational job satisfaction (Vandenabeele, 2013).

According to the study conducted by Macky and Boxall (2007), there exists a positive and significant correlation between the application of high performance work system and outcome of job satisfaction in employees in New Zealand. This finding is consistent with the previous studies that have found that the models of HPWS and levels of employee job satisfaction correlate with each other both directly and indirectly (Guest, 1999; Takeuchi et al., 2009, Wu and Chaturvedi, 2009). HPWS practices support and empower employees to make their own decisions or to voice their own opinions in the workplace, which in turn leads to higher job satisfaction (Lawler, 1986). On a similar note, Guest (2002) argued that employees were more satisfied when HPWS practices were applied in the firm strategy because they had more opportunities to attend internal and external training and development programmes to enhance their skills and knowledge and were able to gain more career-related information through discussion with their colleagues and superiors.

Messersmith et al. (2011) mentioned several reasons why HPWS may relate to a higher level of employee job satisfaction. For example, employees are often hired through an extensive selection procedure and trained in an organisation specifically for work-related skills. Therefore, employees are better suited to their posts. In addition, through other dimensions of HPWS, such as training and development initiatives and performance appraisal in organisations will better-fit employees to do well in their job. As a result, employees are more likely to feel satisfied with their jobs as they are able to perform their job responsibilities more efficiently. Further, HPWS allows a higher level of job security, greater information, sharing opportunities and tighter linkages between one's performance and compensation. These factors will lead to more satisfied and motivated employees, which in turn should enhance employee satisfaction and enhanced performance.

On the contrary, low job satisfaction is an important indicator of a decrease in employee production and can result in behaviour and attitudes such as absenteeism (Martin and Miller, 1986) and turnover intentions (Dupre and Day, 2007). It is because, Lease (1998) argued, that employees with higher job satisfaction are usually less likely to be absent, less likely to leave, more productive and more satisfied with their lives. It is obvious, without job satisfaction in the work place, no employee will remain committed in the organisation. Numerous studies have indicated that dissatisfied employees are more likely to quit their jobs or be absent than satisfied employees (e.g., Hackett and Guion, 1985).

The connection between HPWS and job satisfaction has been explored in many studies (e.g., Guest, 1999; Edgar and Geare, 2005; Macky and Boxall, 2007; Boon et al., 2011; Messersmith et al., 2011; Innocenti et al., 2011; Mendelson et al., 2011; Den Hartog et al., 2013) and the results of these studies indicate that HPWS is positively related to job satisfaction. For example, the study conducted by Guest (1999) found there is a significant positive connection between the greater use of the HR practices and employee satisfaction in

the UK. In New Zealand, researchers used regression analysis and found there is a significant positive connection between job satisfaction and HR practices (Edgar and Geare, 2005). A similar result was found by Innocenti et al. (2011) who claimed that the employees of Italy, too, were positively influenced through the HR practices in the organisation and positively associated with job satisfaction. A study regarding the management and the workforce of a chain restaurant in the Netherlands found that HR practices had a positive effect on their employee job satisfaction (Den-Hartog et al., 2013).

Boon et al. (2011) carried out a study on 412 Dutch employees to find that the employee observations of HR practices had a positive effect on their job satisfaction. The study also confirmed that person-job fit and person-organisation fit mediates the relationship between HR practices and job satisfaction. Another study on Dutch employees found an indirect and yet positive relationship between job satisfaction and HR practices. However, the result also indicated that the job and organisational characteristic mediates the relationship between HR practices and job satisfaction (Stein, 2004). It was through the use of regression analyses that HR planning and training and development positively affected job satisfaction in employees. Another research examined the link between the practices of HPWS and employee attitude in New Zealand (Macky and Boxall, 2007). HPWS was significantly related to the individual employee's job satisfaction. Mendelson et al. (2011) conducted a research on Canadian employees regarding the relationship between HPWS and employee attitude. The study involved SEM analysis with outcomes that showed a high involvement work system affected job satisfaction significantly and positively. Adding to this, Ang et al. (2013) examined the management and employees of a regional Australian hospital and found job satisfaction had a significant positive connection to HPWS practices.

The above-mentioned studies are based on the effect of HPWS on job satisfaction. However, there are a number of researchers who have also examined the impact of individual

HR practices, which constitute HPWS on job satisfaction (i.e., Appelbaum et al., 2000; Petrescu and Simmons (2008); Gould-Williams and Gatenby, 2010; Katou and Budhwar, 2010). For example, Appelbaum et al. (2000) conducted a study in the US and found that training, pay for performance, fair pay, autonomy in decision making, organisational support with work-life balance issues, and promotion opportunities positively related to job satisfaction. Another study conducted by Petrescu and Simmons (2008) found that employee involvement, job autonomy, training and development and supervision had a positive effect on job satisfaction. Similarly, researchers Gould-Williams and Gatenby (2010) found that HR practices such as performance appraisals, training and development programmes and compensation and reward schemes triggered positive effects on the job satisfaction of employees from local government sectors in the UK. A study of 20 manufacturing organisations in Bangladesh found that HR practices indeed had a positive relationship with job satisfaction (Absar et al., 2010).

On the other hand, the study of the relationship between job satisfaction and performance has a controversial background. There is debate among researchers if the satisfaction of the employees can guarantee their productiveness. Therefore, HR practitioners are concerned about the effects on job satisfaction and in turn, the impact on performance and other outcomes. Because of the mentioned reason, the discussion focuses job satisfaction as it is an important attitude for the employee that drives performance and outcome (Boxall and Macky, 2007). Most of the earlier research suggested an inconsistent and rather weak connection between job satisfaction and performance. For example, in 1985, a literature review submitted that the statistical relationship between job satisfaction and performance was insignificant (Sarri and Judge, 2004). This argument concluded that the presumed connection between job satisfaction and performance was questionable. However, upon further research, this conclusion has been deemed disagreeable. Other researchers have suggested that the failure

in distinguishing a positive relationship between job satisfaction and performance is an ineffective employee performance appraisal, which did not reflect important employee attitude and behaviour (Organ, 1988).

Organisations do not get a direct benefit from employee skill unless they are translated via positive attitudes and behaviours of the employees (Wright et al., 1999). An employee's behaviour and attitudes will reflect to an extent where they will use their capabilities to promote performance of the organisation. It is evident that employees with positive attitudes and behaviours, for instance higher job satisfaction in the work benefit the organisation, hence positively affecting organisational performance (Park et al., 2003). Job satisfaction provides positive feelings to employees concerning the various aspects of job responsibilities. For example, the organisational policies and procedures and factors involved, such as job responsibilities and work environment, all can lead to positive influence to greater job satisfaction. On the other hand, organisational constraints that hinder job performance, such as the preparation of tasks without the necessary skills to perform the job, have a negative impact on job satisfaction. Hence, the development of an HR system ensures the correct processes of identifying and selecting the finest fit will lead to higher employee job satisfaction. High job satisfaction is an integral part of the organisation as it affects employee outcomes such as job performance (Spector, 1997; Park et al., 2003).

3.3.2 Affective Commitment

According to Meyer and Herscovitch (2001:301), commitment can be described as 'a force that attach an individual to a course of action of relevance to one or more targets.' The same author added that commitment in the organisation can be a number of forms such as commitment towards job, the profession or to the organisation and to the organisations manager and co-workers. However, organisational commitment is the psychological attachment towards the organisation which is felt by an employee (Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001). Similarly, Meyer

and Allen (1991:67) explained that organisational commitment is a psychological condition that predicts employees' attachment with the organisation and has a connection in regards to the decision to remain in the organisation or to leave the organisation.

One of the ways through which HPWS is likely to affect employees in an organisation is through the effect that HPWS has on the employee's satisfaction towards their organisation. The fundamental argument is that HPWS will likely have an effect on the discretionary behaviour of employees by influencing the level of organisational commitment among employees. When employee commitment towards his/her organisation is high, it means that an employee's values are aligned with the organisation, so the employee will do their best for the organisation (Park et al., 2003; Messersmith et al., 2011).

Over the past years, organisational commitment (OC) has been subject to the scrutiny of research. OC has been extensively studied as an outcome variable and a mediating variable to determine performance (Dhammika et al., 2012; Macky and Boxall, 2007; Fu and Deshpande, 2014). For example, researchers have conducted studies to find that there exists a positive relationship between the implementation of HPWS and the effect of organisational commitment (Macky and Boxall, 2007). Lee and Olshfski (2002) also found OC to be positively correlated to employee performance. Similarly, Fu and Deshpande (2014) added that employee OC is very important for organisations in today's competitive globalised economy because they are always in need of keeping talented employees. It is also a measure of an employee's identification with his/her organisation.

According to Gordon et al. (1980), the definition of OC combines three distinct features: (a) a strong belief in and acceptance of the organisational goals and values; (b) a willingness to exert a considerable amount of effort on behalf of the organisation; and (c) a desire to remain within the organisation (Porter et al., 1974; and Mowday et al, 1979). Even though the concept of organisational commitment has been treated as a single component,

Meyer, Allen and Smith (1993) distinguished OC components in three distinct features: affective, normative and continuance commitment respectively. In addition, employees' relationship with the organisation will most likely vary based on these three components (Sharma and Dhar, 2016).

Affective commitment is an employee's desire to stay in his/her organisation, an intention to make an effort for the organisation, a belief in the values and norms of the organisation and finally an emotional attachment to the organisation (Allen and Meyer, 1996, Glazer and Kruse, 2008, Dasgupta et al., 2014; Sharma and Dhar, 2016). Continuance commitment is the feeling to continue to be a member in the organisation. For example; it is the state of mind where the employee feels obligated in the continuation of his/her job because of the concern that otherwise there is a loss of organisational membership as well as economic benefits and social costs (friendship with colleagues). Normative commitment is the internalized pressure or feeling of obligation to remain in the organisation. For instance, just satisfying economic needs of employees may not be enough to perform well in the job. An employee might feel obligated to stay in the job even if he/she is dissatisfied in their job because s/he does not have any other job alternatives (Meyer and Allen, 1991; Dasgupta et al., 2014).

The present study concentrates on the affective commitment (AC) component of the organisational commitment for several reasons. First, AC has been proven to be affective with employees' work and organisational experiences. Second, AC is strongly and consistently related to work outcomes, such as low absenteeism and organisational citizenship behaviour and its role as an underlying mechanism between HPWS practices and enhanced employee performance (Meyer and Smith, 2000). The term affective commitment is defined as a form of commitment on behalf of the employees that is most desired by the organisations, so this type of commitment is most likely to be instilled in them (Meyer and Allen, 1997). According to Rhoades et al., (2001), affective commitment in employees increases their sense of belonging

in an organisation, enhances their organisational identity and their participative attitude, boosts their willingness in the achievement of organisational goals and decreases turnover rates. Compared to both continuance and normative commitment, a larger spectrum of necessary outcomes can be achieved through affective commitment. Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) claim the main reason behind this are the wide range of behavioural consequences that results in the individual from a perception of commitment through the perspective of desire (affective commitment) rather than a perception of cost-related or obligatory commitment. Such a perception allows the individuals to identify as one with the organisation and refrain from cues that may develop behavioural constraints.

As sated before, affective commitment is the state of belonging and involvement of an individual with an organisation (Guest, 1997; Boxall et al., 2011). The connection between the presence of affective commitment in an employee and the development in his/her individual performance level have been argued by many researchers (Meyer and Allen, 1991). It has also been suggested by researchers that affective commitment also relates to the employee's attendance at work and his/her voluntary contribution for working more than necessary (Meyer and Allen, 1996). Therefore, AC is identified as a vital component for employee attitudes after being reviewed in considerable amount of studies from psychological point of views.

AC is also identified as one of the most important results of the impacts of HRM practices in organisations (Guest, 1997). A major amount of studies by Appelbaum et al. (2000), Guest (1999) and Meyer and Allen (1991) have made positive connections between HPWS and the employee attitude of affective commitment. For example, Meyer and Allen (1991) have argued that affective commitment is positively linked to individual employee performance. Similarly, Meyer et al. (2002) asserts that AC is a driving force that drives employees to improve the organisations' performance. The author also suggested that when emotion induces, then it leads to actions. Thus, employees develop emotional attachment with

their organisations and build a strong relationship. This emotional attachment encourages employee to attend their work and committed to their organisation. It is possible that when employees are affectively committed to their organisation, this emotion motivates employee attitude. The lack of employee's AC results in negative outcomes such as turnover intention and low productivity (Kim, 2014). Therefore, it can be stated that AC components portrays affection toward an organisation, that is, a distinctive characteristic of being a part of an organisation. As a result, employees tend to reciprocate equity and balance with increased trust and a sense of responsibility that is manifested as an affective commitment toward an organisation (Sharma and Dhar, 2016). In addition to that, previous studies have suggested that in comparison to continuance and normative commitment, affective commitment correlated more significantly with work outcomes, i.e., performance, absenteeism, and turnover intentions (Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001). It was also evident that among three dimensions of organisational commitment, the positive effect of AC on employee behaviours and performance has received the greatest support by empirical studies (Moorman et al., 1993; Douglas, 1997; Kehoe and Wright, 2013).

Extensive literature supports that the concept of AC should positively predict individual employee performance (Meyer and Allen, 1991; Hu and Bentler 1999; Boxall and Macky, 2009; Kehoe and Wright, 2013). Employees with high levels of affective commitment show trustworthiness and a desire to remain with the organisation (Meyer and Allen, 1991). A recent study found that emotionally attached employees express a sense of belongingness and achieve organisational targets with passion (Sharma and Dhar, 2016). Similarly, Wright and Gardner, (2003) found that committed employees in the organisation likely to show less counterproductive behaviour than those are less committed.

A range of literature review revealed that there is a strong association between the implementation of HPWS and the result of the affective commitment of an organisation (Tsui

et al., 1997; Meyer and Smith, 2000; Agarwala; 2003; Yu and Egri, 2005; Zaleska and de Menezes; 2007; Chang, 2005; Macky and Boxall, 2007; Sanders et al., 2008; Kwon et al., 2010; Farndale et al., 2011; Mendelson et al., 2011; Yang, 2012; Kehoe and Wright, 2013). For example, Tsui et al. (1997) conducted a study with the report that a higher level of affective commitment would arise in employees when the relationship has a mutual investment. Similarly, another study found that employees had a higher AC when their organisations provided them opportunities to grow in the organisation as well as supported them to gather skills, knowledge and abilities by providing them with training and development opportunities (Zaleska and de Menezes, 2007). Another study also supports the positive connection between HPWS and affective commitment. In addition, a study by Takeuchi et al. (2009) supported a positive relationship between HPWS practices and affective organisational commitment by focusing on the employee climate in the organisation.

It was found through a study that the implementation of HPWS on the workers of New Zealand had a positive connection with their organisational commitment (Macky and Boxall, 2007). Another study carried out by Kwon et al. (2010) revealed that workers of the executive and R&D sectors of East Asian MNCs had a positive effect on their organisational commitment as HPWS were implemented. Upon studying four large organisations of the UK, it was evident that a management that induces HPWS to its workers was able to build a positive relationship with their employees' commitment (Farndale et al., 2011). Similarly, Agarwala (2003) conducted a study in India to find a similar correlation between perceived HPWS and to find out if the employees' believed that high commitment HR practices are important to achieve organisational goal. The result indicated positive relationship between HPWS and organisational commitment to achieve organisational goal. In addition to this, empirical evidences assert that HPWS practices in the organisation creates supportive environment for employees by providing them with training opportunities, regular unbiased performance

feedback, attractive compensation and reward for performance including promotion and advancement opportunities. In return, employees are likely to feel an obligation towards the organisational goals and also develop an emotional attachment with the organisation, which may be result in affective commitment (Kehoe and Wright, 2013).

Furthermore, Yang (2012) conducted a study using the structural equation model (SEM) to identify effects of the high involvement HR practices on the workers' affective commitment in Taiwan and found that the connection in turn had a significant positive impact on their attitude towards organisational citizenship behavior. The relationship between worker attitude and the impact of high involvement work systems on Canadian employees was studied by Mendelson et al. (2011). The positive effects of high involvement work systems on the employees' development of affective commitment was found by using SEM. The study also revealed that such a system negatively affected continuance commitment. Chinese workers were also positively impacted through HPWS (Yu and Egri, 2005). They explained that employees' affective commitment was impacted through an internally consistent and strategically aligned HR practices. The distinct and consistent HR practices showed positive impacts on the employee affective commitment in Netherlands. (Sanders et al., 2008).

According to Messersmith et al. (2011), a positive relationship exists between HPWS and AC whilst there is another positive correlation between AC and individual employee outcome. The authors further argue from a hypothetical point of view that the correlation progresses the concept that HPWS come to aid in the recruitment of employees with organisationally aligned values and in ensuring that employees receive adequate opportunities to excel the organisational success. In this process, employees are more motivated towards greater commitment and this ultimately leads to higher employee performance. What is more, establishing HPWS practices which promotes a higher display of participative behaviour among the employees, sharing information without discretion or secrecy and a more effective

job security—is more likely to create committed human resources in the organisation. HPWS has the potential to provide employees with developmental opportunities that go beyond direct economic benefits. In exchange, employees become more committed to their organisation (Messersmith et al., 2011; Wu and Chaturvedi, 2009). When commitment is high, the employees' values that are aligned with the organisation, reflecting that the employees want to excel in their own departments of the organisation they work for (Mowday et al., 1992).

It was further noted that a number of studies have examined the relationship between individual HR practices that constitute HPWS and organisational commitment (i.e., Boselie, 2010; Katou and Budhwar, 2010; Gardner et al., 2011; Su et al., 2013). For example, using regression analysis, Boselie (2010) found there was a positive relationship between training and coaching and employee commitment level in a Dutch hospital. Katou and Budhwar (2010) examined the impact of HR practices like compensation, job evaluation, incentives, promotion and benefits in relation to employee commitment. The study used SEM to test the variables and found positive correlation between selected HR practices and employee commitment in the manufacturing industry in Greece. Another study conducted by Gardner et al., (2011) found that performance appraisal, merit-based pay, promotion opportunities, bonus, employee participation and information sharing and transparent communication among employees' had a positive relationship with employee affective commitment in the US based organisations. In contrast, a study carried out by Su et al., (2013) found performance bonuses and training had a negative relationship with employee affective commitment in the Australian public organisation. However, previous research has claimed that affective commitment dimensions have mostly focused on western cultures. Other researchers also argued that organisational commitment differ across countries and various cultural settings (Al-Meer, 1995, Dhammika et al., 2012). Thus, the concept of AC still needs further re-examination in light of different cultural and non-western context.

3.3.3 Trust in Management

The term *trust* has been identified by Mayer et al., (1995) as motivation to readily feel vulnerable to a person or a group of people who cannot be controlled or monitored. According to Mayer and Gavin (2005), the perception that the management acts with honesty and demonstrates care for the individuals will result in a reciprocation of desirable behaviour on their side. A dual relationship such as that between the management and the employee requires a base of trust in order to perform effectively to enhance organisational growth (Tzafrir, 2005).

Every sector of HRM requires the basis of trust issues as an innate part (Robinson and Rousseau, 1994). As Tzafrir (2005) points out, employees perceive Human Resources Management practices as beneficial to them, which acts as a stimulant for building trust within them. When HR practices demonstrate the strategies and policies of the organisation, an understanding of its effects normally gives rise to trust in the management (Gillespie and Dietz, 2009). As a matter of fact, HPWS is a representation of the organisation's policies and strategies (Kalshoven and Boon, 2012), and thus the present study promotes the argument that HPWS results in the development of trust for the management in the employee. This link between HPWS and trust in management has been identified by many scholars of the Human Resource Management. It has been expressed that the adoption of HPWS by the management can generate trust in the employees to such an extent that the employees perceive demonstrations of managerial competence, reduction of perceived threat or vulnerability and a benefit towards their own interests (Macky and Boxall, 2007). It has been found by Gould-Williams (2003) as well that practices of the HRM are strong influencers of trust in employees for the management. HPWS is said to have a strong impact on the employer's trustworthiness as perceived by the employees (Searle et al., 2011). Approaches of HPWS have been recognized by Searle and Dietz (2012) as a prime determinant to develop trust within an organisational context.

Krot and Lewicka (2012) stated that an important factor in the variety of relationships is trust. Trust can be identified in three stages: horizontal, which develops between colleagues; vertical, which develops between managers and employees or vice versa; and lastly institutional trust, which develops between employees and organisations. Institutional trust primarily lies in employees' trust towards the organisational goals and procedures, management, technologies, visions and competence. These are generally labelled as different types of trust. For the purpose of this thesis, vertical trust has been emphasised as it reflects the trust between employees and managers. Vertical trust is a more complicated form of trust as one of the parties (the employees) feels defenceless as managers have the power to control resource allocation. A consequence of this is that the superiors are in control of making decisions that can affect the employees significantly. The reason is that subordinates generally depend on their immediate supervisor for their daily tasks and performance, evaluation and promotions (Knoll and Gill, 2011, Wells and Kipnis, 2001). The development of trust, therefore, has a positive impact on the relationships that develop between employees and their employers (Krot and Lewicka, (2012). For example, a study conducted by Yuan and Clegg (2002) found that the presence of vertical trust can enable and encourage employees to an effective and easy decision-making process. In addition, a reduction in operational expenses can be noticed with the improvement of relationships between employee and manager and a development of vertical trust.

For decades now, the formation of relationships has been a fundamental part of human lives and therefore a vital concern for the research in management. The importance of relationships between the organisations and its employees has come to be more prominent in recent years. Effective communication in the workplace can help develop positive and healthy relationships among the employees and can direct their job attitudes and behaviour (Dasgupta and Singh, 2014). Trust is an important part of the relationship; particularly employees' trust

in the organisation. The level of trust reflects employee loyalty towards their organisation and thus influences numerous amounts of important organisational issues ranging from turnover to pilfering to successful organisational change (Perry and Mankin, 2004). Studies have highlighted that the well-being of the individual in business environments depends essentially on the formation of trust and bonds. Trust is the multidisciplinary concept, and it has been explained in different ways based on various perspectives (Farndale et al., 2009; Innocenti et. al., 2011). Whilst psychologists believe it is an attitude of individuals, economists support the view of trust as the result of a rational calculation of costs and benefits (Appelbaum et. al., 2000). Although scholars have used different definitions of trust, the perception by employees that their employers will act upon their commitment is widely recognised as a definition of trust (Innocenti et. al., 2011). According to Bijlsma and Van de Bunt (2003), trust forms when two parties develop a balance of expectation and faith in order to ensure mutual benefit and is established by behaviours in the past that were mutually beneficial. On the other hand, trust between two parties is less when there exists uncertainty of other party's intentions, actions and motives.

The human relation theory (Likert, 1961) suggests that supportive managers and informal relationships between employees and managers helps to reduce 'them and us' attitudes and guides them towards greater trust necessary for flexible behaviour (Pfeffer, 1998). This trust may in turn enhance the upward communication in the organisation, channelling the desires of the customers and ideas from the front-line managers to the top, which will ultimately result in improved service quality. To put it simply, supportive and approachable managers facilitate higher employee trust, which in turn results in better behavioural outcomes, such as employee performance. For example, in India Tata Metallic (TML), people policies have been recognized as an asset to the company. Senior managers of the company practice cross-functional interaction with regard to corporate goals and objectives. They have an open-door

communication culture and knowledge sharing, which ensures communication within all the locations of the company (Moraes, 2007).

Trust in management establishes a belief on the capability of the managers to be able to attain organisational goals, which will ultimately result in employees' benefit. Trust develops only when employees see the managers are expected to be beneficial or favourable for their career development (Whitner, 2001, Robinson and Rousseau, 1994). The degree to which an employee trusts his managers has been proven to affect a number of work outcomes, such as individual employee performance, discretionary behaviour, job satisfaction and organisational commitment and therefore enhances the effectiveness of HRM practices (Dirk and Ferrin, 2001). Employee trust has also been proved to have higher levels of affective commitment (Farndale et al., 2009). For instance, negative feedback from a supervisor is considered justified by an employee, and as a result, employees try hard to improve their performance based on a supervisor's rating. On the contrary, if the employees do not have trust in their manager, they will doubt the accuracy of negative feedback coming from the manager and will not attempt to improve their performance (Dirk and Ferrin, 2001). So, it can be argued that trust is the key element of effective communication between colleagues, managers and employees (Innocenti, et al., 2011). The impacts of administrative communication practices on employee satisfaction, commitment, job performance, lack of attendance or quitting intentions are studied in the research conducted by Dasgupta and Singh (2014) in the Indian manufacturing industry. The results revealed that a collaborative approach, trust in management, clear guidelines, autonomous and thought-provoking tasks were significant factors in the satisfaction, happiness and motivation of employees to influence them towards superior performance. On the contrary, lack of respect and recognition, a hierarchical/dominant approach, and uncompetitive pay practices often caused employees absenteeism and discontinued service in the organisation (Dasgupta and Singh, 2014).

In the perspective of SHRM, the idea of trust is interconnected with employee commitment, which is seen as a precursor to an improved organisational performance (Nichols et al., 2009). According to Alfes et al., (2012), it is essential for employees to develop trust in their employers because they are most likely to translate HPWS as being beneficial for them so they will invest more effort in their work place and have more trust in the employer, which makes a stronger connection between HRM practices and employee outcomes. It was evident that in HPWS, employees targeted with a high level of fairness tended to have stronger beliefs in management promises, stronger feelings of job security and higher levels of trust in management (Guest, 1999). Similarly, Bochner and Hesketh (1994) found that fair organisational policies increased trust in management. In addition, Zacharatos et al., (2005) reported that trust in management mediated the relationship between HPWS and occupational safety. Therefore, the present study argues that HPWS practices enhance employer trust in management, thereby influencing the commitment of employees to their organisation and positively relating to performance outcome.

On the contrary, if there is a lack of employee trust towards their management, the employee may interpret HPWS less favourably, and a reduction can be seen in the extent to which HPWS can affect job performance and employees' well-being (Innocenti et al., 2011). The same authors found that HRM practices work better on employee attitudes when trust in management is high as compared to a situation where employee trust in management is relatively low. Another study conducted by Farndale et al., (2011) reported that a development of trust in the superiors can strengthen the relationship between the factors of performance management in HPWS practices and employee commitment. But, the limitations of the study mentioned in the aforementioned paragraphs examined the role of trust in being able to control the relationship between HRM and the resulting job performance in significant organisations with selected HRM practices only. A number of HPWS literature (Mishra and Morrissey, 1990;

Laschinger et al., 2000) has proven trust to be a mediator between HPWS and employee performance, especially in the context of the service industry. Similarly, a number of empirical works has also established a positive relationship between empowerment and trust in the context of service sector (Laschinger, 2004).

It was reported that the development of commitment in employees and trust in management can be positively linked when the subordinates feel supported by their superiors. The mentioned observations were under the influence of the HR practices used by the organisation and hence suggested that HR practices are able to nurture employee attitudes. The same author suggested that having trust in the management might work as a mediating factor between HPWS practices and the reciprocation to these practices through employee attitudes. For example, Appelbaum et al. (2000) studied three manufacturing industries and found a positive effect on key employee attitudes such as commitment and satisfaction. The author suggested that practicing HPWS could mean that employees will receive the opportunities where they can participate freely in decision-making processes, are more committed to the organisation and this relationship would be due to enhanced trust in management and intrinsic rewards. This links measures of HPWS to effective empowerment to employee trust and as a result improved employee performance.

The importance of trust and its positive outcomes for both individuals and their organisations can be found in a number of other studies that have been conducted outside the periphery of the HPWS framework. For example, arguments have been provided supporting that the impact of trust on employee attitudes, and its succeeding contributions to the organisation cannot be neglected (Boxall and Purcell, 2000). In addition, it has been found that trust has a positive connection with an array of employee attitudes and work behaviour, including the behaviour of organisational citizenship (Dirks and Ferrin, 2002). Trust facilitates a higher display of cooperation among the organisation and is an important component to

measure how the employees feel about their relationship with those in managerial positions. The outcome of it is that trust plays the role of a precursor to a competitive advantage for organisations (Searle et al., 2011).

From the above discussion, it can be argued that trust in management is a potential employee attitudinal variable that facilitates the connection between HPWS and employee performance. Since organisational support is felt by subordinates through their immediate supervisor, employees are willing to take risks and do their jobs more efficiently to reciprocate with more productive work and repay back to their trust in the organisation. It should also be noted that the AMO framework is applicable to this study as it helps to understand the processes that make the connection between HPWS and employee performance happen. Therefore, relying on the AMO framework, an argument is made that the adoption of HR practices that improve skills in employees, such as intensive training, leads to an improvement in employee performance. As a result, employees build trust in their management. Similarly, by executing motivation-induced practices, such as unbiased performance appraisals, performance bonuses, and promotions, employees are motivated and act favourably towards HR practices in the organisation and the management. Last but not least, by facilitating HR practices that improve the chance for opportunities in the workplace, such as communication and information sharing and flatter hierarchical practices, employees are more enthusiastic triggering their abilities, skills and motivation for a better job performance. Working in such an environment, employees will feel their organisation values and supports them, thereby reinforcing more trust in their managers and in the organisations where they work.

HPWS literature identifies a strong connection between employees' attitudes and their performance. An employee's behaviour and attitude will reflect to an extent how he/she will use his/her capabilities to promote performance of the organisation (Messersmith et al., 2011). Substantial literature reviews indicate that employees' trust towards their organisation can be

enhanced by using selected HR practices (i.e., Innocenti et al., 2011; Alfes et al., 2012). The majority among them are related to HPWS constructs (i.e., Zacharatos et al., 2005; Macky and Boxall, 2007, Farndale et al., 2011; Searle et al., 2011; Searle and Dietz, 2012, Rubel et al.: 2018; Mihail and Klutsiniotis; 2018). For example, Zacharatos et al., (2005) found trust in management mediates the relationship between HPWS and occupational safety. Searle et al. (2011) found employee job security increases trust in the organisation as it makes people secure in their job and therefore positively impacts their performance outcome. Recent research also suggests that employee outcomes mediate the relationship between HPWS and service quality. However, although the result indicated trust mediated the relationship between HPWS and employee outcome, it did not moderate the relationship in the Greek banking industry (Mihail and Klutsiniotis, 2018). Rubel et al. (2018) demonstrated that the high commitment human resource management (HCHRM) is positively related to employee service behavior in the banking industry. In addition, employee attitudinal variable such as trust in management mediates the relationship between HCHRM and employee service behavior.

Furthermore, Wang and Xu (2017) investigated how and when service-oriented HPWS impacts employees' service performance. The survey data were gathered from 568 frontline service employees and their managers across 92 branches of a large bank in China. The findings suggest that service-oriented HPWS affected employees' service performance via its impact on their ability, customer orientation and service climate perception. Dasgupta and Singh (2014) explored the impacts of the communication of the management team on employees' happiness, commitment, job performance, attendance and turnover rate in the Indian manufacturing industry. The result revealed that collaborative approaches, trust in management, clear direction, autonomy and challenging tasks are important to keeping employees satisfied and happy and to motivate them towards superior performance. On the contrary, lack of respect

and recognition, a hierarchical/dominant approach, and uncompetitive pay practices often caused employees' absenteeism and discontinued service in the organisation.

Based on the above literature review, it can be argued that employees' interpretations of HPWS varies in different ways, and more importantly, employees' perception about the HR practices are more strongly related to employee attitudes than the actual practices. In the present study, job satisfaction, affective commitment and trust in management are categorised as an important employee attitudinal variable which resulted from employees' perception of HPWS. Hence, the study proposes the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4: HPWS practices positively impacts employee attitudes.

In addition, when organisations establishes right implementation of HPWS in the organisation, it can positively influence the employees' performance via their positive attitudes. Therefore, on the basis of this assumption, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 5: Employees' attitudes positively predicts employee performance.

3.4 Conceptual Model specification

The study developed the conceptual model and hypotheses based on the literature review and research gap. In order to explore the relationship between the high performance work system practices and individual employee performance in the service industry in Bangladesh, a conceptual model was developed to conduct this research, analysing the data and reach in conclusion. This model includes HPWS practices (as independent variable), selected attitudinal variables (as mediating), institutional variables (as moderating) and employee performance (as dependent variables). (See Figure-3)

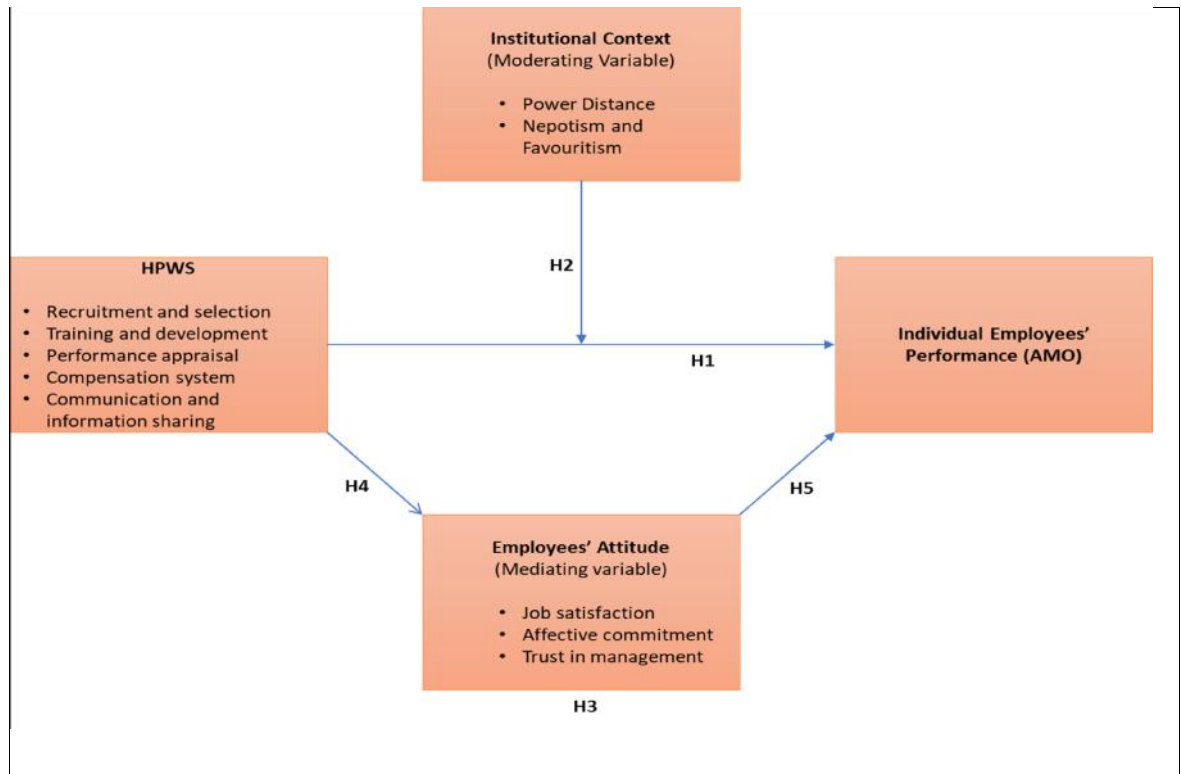


Figure 3: Conceptual model 1

The model depicts that HPWS enhances employee performance directly and indirectly. First, the study shows by analysing a model of the connection between HPWS and employee' performance that hypothesizes HPWS according to the framework of ability, motivation and opportunity (AMO). Therefore, **H1** reflects that the HPWS of an organisation and its employee performance are directly connected. The assumption is that the use of HPWS will have positive employee outcomes through a bundle of HR practices, i.e., recruitment and selection practices, training and development, performance appraisal, compensation, communication and information sharing. These practices will create more capable and highly motivated human resources to do their job to provide further support to HPWS – employee performance link. As a result, employees are more engaged in their work to enhance greater performance in the work place. In addition, based on the AMO framework, the conceptual model also suggests that the performance of employees will rise when they are able to do it better (i.e., abilities); they are

motivated adequately (i.e., motivation); and when the environment of the workplace is supportive of the employee's to share their opinions (i.e., opportunity to participate).

Findings from literature reviews reflect that employee attitude has a long-standing theoretical platform in the strategic human resource management (SHRM) research. Therefore, the conceptual model further investigates the employee attitudinal variables of job satisfaction, affective commitment and trust in management as transmission pathways to channelize the relationship between HPWS and employee performance through the lenses of Ability-Motivation-Opportunity (AMO) theory. It is noteworthy that mediation is a causal model that explains the process of 'why' and 'how' a cause and an effect happens (Wu and Zumbo, 2008:369). Therefore, a mediational analysis attempts to determine the intermediary process that leads from 'independent variable to the dependent variable' (Muller et al., 2005:852).

For example, ability enhancing practices, such as intensive training and development programmes provided by the organisation, enhance employees' knowledge, abilities and skills (Kehoe and Wright, 2013). Further, well planned recruitment and selection practices is conducted in a way that the candidates who are best fit can be found for the right jobs of an organisation (Abdullah et al., 2011) which in turn enhances employees' job satisfaction. Because, employees are satisfied when they realize their potential suits the job role well, and when they develop increased abilities for their respective duties, and this positively affects their performance. Consequently, communication and information sharing in the organisation offer prospects for dialogues across organisational hierarchies, create chances to share knowledge among employees and managers in the organisation (Appelbaum et al., 2000; Martin-Garcia and Tomas, 2016). This phenomenon promotes trust between managers and employees' because employees can share their views and opinions regarding their work as well as take part in organisational decision-making processes, which results in enhanced employee performance. This provision tends to develop the employees' confidence further as they are

more self-sufficient in their task performance. As the employees participate more in quality circle programmes, their morale is enhanced, consecutively increasing job performance (Jiang et al., 2012).

Further to this, unbiased performance appraisal, compensation and performance bonus motivates employees to stay committed towards their organisation for a longer period of time and positively relates to performance outcomes. The research supports that motivation enhancing practices such as performance appraisal and compensation policies including performance bonus and other incentives tends to motivate employees to perform well by feeling that they are receiving fair treatment from their organisation and show positive responses towards their organisation with an enhancement in performance (Rehman and Ahmed, 2015). From this angle, the present study argues that with the enhancement of skills, motivation and knowledge in individual employees, along with opportunities provided by the organisation through strong HPWS implementation, employees are more likely to trust in their management, satisfied in the job and stay committed in the organisation they work for and perform well in their job. Therefore, the conceptual model shows that HPWS directly and positively impact the employee attitudes (**H4**) which in turn positively impacts the employee enhanced performance (**H5**). In addition, when organisations establish the HPWS in the organisation, it can positively influence the employees' performance via their positive attitudes thus employee attitudes mediate the relationship between HPWS and employee performance (**H3**). In this case, mediating variables leads to a deeper and more refined understanding of causal relationship between HPWS (independent variable) and employee performance (dependent variable) (Wu and Zumbo, 2008).

The model next investigates how a normative component in an institutional context acts as a moderator between HPWS and employee performance. A moderation effect is a causal model that assumes 'when' or 'for whom' an independent variable most strongly or weakly causes a dependent variable (Frazier et al., 2004; Kraemer et al., 2002). In particular, a

moderator modifies the strength or direction (i.e., positive or negative) of causal relationship (Wu and Zumbo, 2008: 370). For instance, evidence suggests that a country's cultural differences, i.e., high power distance, nepotism and favouritism, are most likely to affect the strength of HR practices and influence employee performance. The degree of tolerance for power distance, nepotism and favouritism practices in the organisation has the power to impact the relationship between manager and employees. Based on the above evidence, it can be argued that such an environment in a workplace diminishes employee confidence and negatively affect HPWS which result in decreased employee performance. Therefore, the study proposes that institutional context (i.e., power distance, nepotism and favouritism) variables will moderate the relationship between HPWS and employee performance (**H2**) in the organisation. The following table reflects the study objectives which is related to proposed hypotheses later discussed in the result and analysis chapters.

3.5 Link between objectives and hypotheses

Table 3.3 Link between objectives and hypotheses:

Research objectives	Proposed hypotheses of the study
Objective 1: To explore the relationship between HPWS and employee performance.	Hypothesis 1: HPWS directly and positively impact the employee performance (as reflected in AMO)
Objective 2: To critically analyse how HPWS impact employees' attitude, which in turn affects employees' performance.	<p>Hypothesis 3: The relationship between HPWS practices and employee performance is mediated by employee attitude.</p> <p>Hypothesis 4: HPWS practices positively impact employee attitude.</p> <p>Hypothesis 5: Employee attitude positively predicts employee performance.</p>
Objective 3: To examine how institutional environment affect the HPWS and employee's performance.	Hypothesis 2: Institutional context (power distance, nepotism and favouritism) will moderate the relationship between HPWS practices and employees' performance.

In this chapter, the researchers made a detailed review of two major theoretical approaches, linking the relationship between the extent of HPWS and employee performance outcome. There are two theories that traditionally influence the connection between HR practices and organisational performance. The theories are: the resource-based view (RBV) and AMO theory (Appelbaum et al., 2000; Lepak et al., 2006; Armstrong et al., 2010; Messersmith et al., 2011; Jiang et al., 2012). Therefore, the researcher considered RBV and AMO theory as key theoretical foundations to measure employee performance in the present study.

Furthermore, the chapter discussed important employee attitudinal variables (i.e., job satisfaction, affective commitment and trust in management) and their link to employee performance, which has a well-established theoretical platform in the SHRM research (Macky and Boxall, 2007; Wu and Chaturvedi, 2009; Messersmith et al., 2011; Innocenti et al., 2011; Ananthram et al., 2018). Researchers suggests that HR policies and practices shape employees' perceptions which influences employee level outcome by affecting the way they feels or behaves. In addition, work-related employee attitudes are crucial for organisations and employees. However, few studies have explored the underlying mechanisms and employee attitudinal variables such as job satisfaction, affective commitment and trust in management, linking HPWS and employee performance particularly in the service industry of Bangladesh. Therefore, the present study chose these mediating variables for further investigations to find why they remain a 'black box' in the relationship between HPWS and employee performance. Doing so provides support and adds to the HRM literature by examining the linkage between HPWS and employee performance.

Chapter 4

Research Methodology

Introduction

The previous chapters have discussed the literature review and conceptual model that provide basis for the hypotheses development of this study. In this chapter, the researcher describes the choice of the most appropriate methodology used to test the hypotheses derived from the literature review. More precisely, this chapter is organised around six main topics of methodology: the research paradigm, research method, quantitative phase of the study, qualitative phase of the study, including the data collection procedure and analysis technique for each phase of the study. In addition, the chapter discusses the pilot study, which aims at establishing the validity and reliability of the data collection instruments employed in this study. As ethics is important for this research, the ethical process is also discussed. The chapter ends with a brief description of the research context and rationale for choosing telecom service sector in the study.

4.1 Research Paradigm

The research paradigm relates to set of ideas and beliefs which is related to a certain type of research. It represents the purpose of the research is based on particular philosophy and views that those who use the research paradigm share those views (Denscombe, 2008). Various research paradigms consist of different epistemological and ontological assumptions that influence the choice of research methodology (Saunders et al; 2016). The paradigm concept was first developed by Kuhn (Yvonne, 2010). Kuhn (1962:45) described paradigm as a ‘cluster of beliefs’ which direct the researcher to make decision about what and how it should be studied and interpreted’ (Yvonne, 2010). In general, research is influenced by a cluster of beliefs and some established practices of theoretical and methodological ideas. The set of beliefs that guide

the research process are termed as paradigm (Collis and Hussey, 2013). Creswell (2009) and Collis and Hussey (2009) compare the three basic principles of assumptions such as epistemological, ontological and methodological assumptions discussed in the following paragraphs. (see also in Table-4.1).

Table 4.1: Three basic principles of Philosophical assumptions

Philosophical assumption	Positivism	Interpretivism	Pragmatism
Ontological assumption (the nature of reality)	Reality is objective and singular, separate from the researcher	Reality is subjective and multiple, as seen by the participants	Accept external reality. Choose explanations that is well suited for the desired outcome.
Epistemological assumption (what constitutes valid knowledge)	Researcher is independent of that being researched.	Researcher interacts with what is being researched.	Both objective and subjective points of view.
Methodological assumption (the process of research)	Process is deductive. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Study of cause and effect with a static design (categories are isolated beforehand). ▪ Generalizations lead to prediction, explanation and understanding. ▪ Findings are accurate and reliable through validity and reliability 	Process is inductive. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Study of mutual simultaneous shaping of factors with an emerging design (categories are identified during the process). ▪ Patterns and /or theories are developed for understanding. ▪ Findings are accurate and reliable through verification 	Process is inductive and deductive. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mixed method design-based research. ▪ Findings are validated by triangulations of qualitative and quantitative data source.

Source: Adopted from Creswell (2009:17); Collis and Hussey, (2009); Tashakkori and Teddlei (1998).

Epistemology is concerned with nature of knowledge, what constitutes acceptable and legitimate knowledge, and how we can communicate knowledge to others (Creswell, 2009). Epistemology is mainly about knowing what our theory of truth is and whether it is possible to

observe a phenomenon (Bryman and Bell, 2011). On the other hand, ontology is the philosophical position about the nature of reality (Oppong, 2014). It refers to the significance of phenomena and the nature of their presence. Ontology is concerned with the question of whether the phenomena under study are real or illusory (Gill and Johnson, 2010; Saunders et al., 2016). Methodological assumption is associated with the research process. From a positivist perspective, the concept should be explained in a way that they can be measured. This approach deals with large sample size and put emphasis on objective facts and formulate hypotheses. On the other hand, interpretivist research is carried out by exploring relatively small sample size in a course of time. The analysis carried out would be able to understand what might happen in a situation and figure out patterns that are present in other situations (Creswell and Clark, 2007).

The research paradigm has been influenced by the way people look at the reality labeled as objectivism and subjectivism (Saunders et al., 2016). It is observed that different people might have different perspective of viewing things. However, there are not unlimited number of difference of views. As such, in terms of research, there are two major ways of interpreting the world (Mason and McBride, 2014). For example, one view predicts that the world is largely objective which suggests that there is only one truth or a small number of universal truths and it can be measured by using numbers. Another view implies that, the world is subjective which means it is open to many interpretations and cannot be measured by numbers and therefore, words can describe it more accurately. Objective reality argues that researchers observe reality independently and not biased by the influence of other individuals. On the other hand, subjective view of reality sees it as dependent of individuals action (Collis and Hussey, 2009; Saunders et al., 2016). People's perception about reality changes over a period of time thus research paradigms have been formulated by the researchers.

Different authors have classified research paradigms into various categories. For example, Guba and Lincoln (1994) classified paradigms into four paradigms namely positivism, post-positivism, critical theory and constructivism. Similarly, Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) also suggested four paradigms that include positivism, post-positivism, pragmatism and constructivism. However, discussions concerning research paradigm begins with two dominant philosophical positions of positivism and interpretivism or constructivism (Collis and Hussey, 2009) (see for example Table: 4.2). According to Guba and Lincoln (1994) and Bryman and Bell (2011), there are some common phenomena in these categories that all paradigms offer, which is a continuum between objectivity and subjectivity. The table below highlights the main characteristics of the paradigms presented.

Table 4.2: Main characteristics of the research paradigm

Positivism	Interpretivism
Quantitative	Qualitative
Objective	Subjective
Scientific	Humanist

Adopted from: Collis and Hussey (2013)

4.1.1 Positivism

Positivist paradigm originally derived from natural sciences. The positivist paradigm assumes that reality is independent and the inquiry of reality will not influence it. The aim of this paradigm is to find out theories which can be carried out by conducting research through observations and experiments. In positivist paradigm, researchers use theories to examine phenomenon happening in the reality. Positivist paradigm assumes that reality is consisted of events that can be directly apprehend and understood. The ontology of positivism is that the fact of reality is objective and external. Whereas, the epistemological assumption of the positivist researchers is that knowledge acquired by observation can also be significant (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Thus, researchers are applying appropriate reasoning to explain the fact

that are being under study. Positivist researcher believes two opposing views between object and subject implies that it is visible to separate the observer from the observed by adopting scientific methods. By doing this process, the researcher being an objective analyst is supposed to be unbiased and free from researchers' own point of views about the study (Saunders et al., 2016). Therefore, it can be inferred that positivist views are associated with deductive research approach where a theory helps to develop hypotheses and then can be measured by using quantitative method of data analysis using statistical tools to confirm or reject the hypotheses proposed in the study. By this way, the link between study variables can be determined in an objective manner (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Bryman and Bell, 2011).

Quantitative methods of data collection and analysis have been widely used to ascertain the link between HPWS and employee performance (Boxall et al; 2011) and organisational performance (Huselid, 1995). In fact, most of the studies on HPWS were conducted using quantitative methods across industries (see Boselie, 2010; Mao et al; 2013; Muduli et al; 2016; Obiedat et al; 2016). For example, Mao et al; (2013) explored the relationship between HPWS and employee performance in Chinese manufacturing industries. The research used quantitative methods of data collection based on 370 employees. The data analysis technique used structural equation model (SEM) by AMOS software to test the hypotheses derived from conceptual framework. The findings suggest that HPWS have a positive effect on employee outcome; job satisfaction and affective commitment. The result of the study also suggests that managers can improve employee attitudes by encouraging them to acquire a variety of skills. Similarly, Muduli et al., (2016) examined the HPWS in Indian context. The research found that Indian corporate managers in service sector should adopt HPWS practices by aligning with employee engagement to improve organisational performance. The study has been tested using SEM by using AMOS software to analyse the relationships in the research model to find out the relationships among variables.

According to Creswell and Clark, (2007), researchers chose research paradigm based on previous research conducted in similar context or situations, research questions, known variables, existing theories and so forth. In addition, researchers also consider time constraints, accessibility of data and other resources. However, positivists are often criticized for avoiding the distinction between social and natural world without understanding the true meaning that are brought to social life as they are just refining existing knowledge which is already established and known. However, quantitative researchers assert that they are not aiming to produce science of laws rather attempt to build a set of additional generalizations (Creswell and Clark, 2007).

4.1.2 Interpretivism

In the interpretivism paradigm, it is impossible for a researcher to disconnect a person from the reality and therefore communicate with what is being researched. Unlike positivism, interpretivism focuses on explaining phenomenon rather than measuring it. Epistemologically, the researcher determines the reality by focusing closely on the context and the object which is studied in the interpretivism paradigm. Therefore, in this paradigm, the research method focuses on qualitative and inductive approach to examine the way people think and how they make sense to a particular thing by using focus group discussion, interviews and so forth (Creswell, 2009). Qualitative researchers analyse their data based on the research questions and types of data collected based on the philosophical assumptions essential for the study. Analysis requires an understanding of how to make sense of text and images so that researcher can predict the answers to the questions. Also, qualitative researchers look for patterns or themes in the texts or image analysis. They look for larger patterns of generalization. Data are collected through interview, observation and document analysis. These results cannot be measured numerically or statistically but interpreted and organised into themes or categories (Creswell and Clark, 2007).

Although the positivism perspective seems to be the dominant paradigm in the field of HRM and performance link, it should not be seen as the only reliable and interesting philosophical approach in the HRM study. Interpretivism has been also used in research into the linkages between HRM and firm performance study. The study conducted by Chowdhury and Mahmood (2012), indicated a partial influence of societal institutions such as national education and training systems, regulatory frameworks and IR systems on the development of HRM practices in multinational organisations in Bangladesh. The study also points out the influence of western HR practices on Bangladeshi organisations alongside the influence of globalization. This study is consistent with the interpretivism paradigm. The researchers have used qualitative research approach by conducting interviews of the managers of the case study organisations. However, the mentioned study only relied upon a single managerial-level informant from selected organisations. This may create problems with measurement error and ignores the possibility that what manager say is actually true fact and being done in their organisations. It is possible that, employees might have different perceptions of the nature and event of the HR practices used in the said organisation (Gerhart and Fang, 2005; Purcell, 1999).

The positivism and interpretivism are not in competition with each other, but suggest that their specific characteristics to research and the choice of research paradigm should relate to research question. However, these two opposing views suggest their individual characteristics. Based on the above discussion, it is clear that both the paradigm has their limitations, flaws and criticism. According to Tsoukas and Knudson (2003), it is difficult for business and management researchers to agree about one best philosophy. To address the research question in the current study, the researcher combines both positivism and interpretivism mutually exclusive paradigm about the nature and sources of knowledge as discussed in the following sections.

4.1.3 Pragmatism

The debate on epistemology and ontology is long standing since it is often comes to a question of choosing either the positivist or interpretivist research paradigms (Saunders et al; 2016). Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) state that, it is convenient for a researcher to think about the philosophy adopted as complementary to each other rather than in opposite positions. Pragmatism gained its legitimacy mainly because of the contribution it has provided in the management studies and also by providing an epistemological justification for mixing the research methods. Pragmatism suggests that mixing qualitative and quantitative data in a single study is sometimes necessary to answer the research questions (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009). Therefore, pragmatism paradigm refers to 'mixed methods' which contain elements of both the quantitative and qualitative approaches (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998:5).

The main advantages of adopting quantitative and qualitative research validate and confirm the result through triangulation. Triangulation is a powerful tool to address the research problem. Triangulation can be defined by as a combining the methodologies in a particular study. Depending on single data or methods sometimes questions the research validity and reliability. Triangulating the data source therefore can reduce the weakness of any single method. (Jick, 1979). In the current study, the researcher maintained a pragmatist paradigm since this view is generally labeled as philosophical partner for mixed method research. Pragmatist paradigm provides researchers to think free and without any bias (Denscombe, 2008). There are four advantages of pragmatist views used in the mixed method research. First of all, pragmatism combines qualitative and quantitative approaches, second, pragmatism provides a third alternative of research approach by introducing mixed method approaches or fusion of methods which facilitates researcher to do in-depth analysis of particular piece of work. Third, pragmatism views not only allow the researcher to conduct mixed method approaches but it is also necessary for an in-depth analysis in order to answer the research question. Finally, pragmatism is perceived as the most

advantageous philosophical view for the mixed method approach. (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998; Denscombe, 2008).

In particular, the pragmatic method facilitated the researcher to gather employees and managers' perception and experiences about how HPWS practices impacts employee attitudes and subsequently employee performance via the mechanisms of both quantitative survey and qualitative interview. Furthermore, the research also investigated the moderating role of the country's institutional context between HPWS practices and employee performance. Mixed method research design is discussed in detail in the following next section.

4.2 Rationale and purpose for mixed method

It has been discussed in earlier chapters that although studies concerning HPWS practices are growing in numbers, an in-depth knowledge of the facts observed and experienced regarding HPWS research is still only a handful in South Asian context. In addition, the rapid growth of Bangladesh's economy presents an unusual and interesting background for the establishment of HPWS practices and research regarding policies and practices. The researcher acknowledges that only quantitative researches have been undertaken in order to investigate the roles of HPWS practices and its influence in the employees' performance of an organisation. A mixed method research is thus used to analyse and comprehend the research problem by combining a complete analysis of the data collected in the quantitative and qualitative phases which is described below in detail (see also Table-4.3).

In addition, based on the present study objectives, the research can be classified exploratory research in nature. The main purpose of exploratory study is undertaken with the objective either to explore an area where little is known or to investigate the possibilities of undertaking a particular study. Exploratory studies are also conducted to develop, refine and test the hypotheses from the viewpoint of the study objectives (Kumar, 2011). Since the present study is a unique and first empirical study in the area of HPWS and employee performance

relationship in the context, therefore, in-depth analysis was required to answer the research question and based on the study objectives the hypotheses were developed and tested.

The research seeks to fill the existing knowledge gap in the field of HPWS and individual employee performance link in a non-western context. Based on the research aim and objectives of the study, the current research has adopted mixed method research approach to answer the research question. Moreover, due to contextual differences, the mixed method research (quantitative and qualitative) is appropriate to understand how the different variables in the study relate with each other which in turn allows an in-depth analysis of the research data (Creswell, 2009). Since the research question seeks to examine the impact of HPWS practices on individual employee level performance, therefore survey was conducted to capture the employee level perception in the quantitative phase of the study. Quantitative research method is structured where the survey questions are predetermined by the researcher. On the other hand, qualitative research method is unstructured and allows flexibility in all aspects. The structured approach is more suitable to determine the phenomenon whereas unstructured approach predominantly used to explore its nature and attitudes towards an issue (Kumar, 2011) For example, in the quantitative phase of the present research, employee level data intent to find out how many respondents have particular perspective towards HPWS and its impact on their performance. Therefore, there is a need for structured approach to investigate the enquires. Whereas, the qualitative phase commenced to validate and to provide support for the employee level perception by interviewing managers. Qualitative phase examined different perspective of an issue or different views managers hold towards research issues these are better explored using unstructured enquires. Before undertaking the unstructured enquires the researcher seeks to find out structured enquiry to ascertain the diversity in a phenomenon which can be quantified through the structured enquiry.

The HRM sector is under massive progression, subjected to constant development and reconstruction (Paauwe, 2009). The purpose of the researcher is to see how systematic HPWS

in the organisations influences employee attitude through which employee performance impacts and can be analysed. Further, in order to achieve the desired clarity over this issue, the researcher went to great lengths by designing an amalgamation of both quantitative and qualitative assessment. The quantitative judgement made through employee level surveys and then the semi-structured interviews were conducted with managers in the qualitative phase of the study. These insights seem to add muscle to the overall skeletal structure constructed during the quantitative phase.

The Table 4.3 below highlights the main differences between quantitative and qualitative research method.

Table 4.3: Highlights of the main differences between quantitative and qualitative research method.

	Qualitative	Quantitative
Conceptual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Concerned with understanding human behaviour from the informant's perspective. ▪ Assumes a dynamic and negotiated reality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Concerned with discovering facts about social phenomena. ▪ Assumes a fixed and measurable reality
Methodological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Data are gathered via participant observation and interviews. ▪ Data are analysed by themes from descriptions by informants. ▪ Data are reported in the language of the informant. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Data are gathered via measuring things. ▪ Data are analysed through numerical comparisons and statistical inferences. ▪ Data are reported through statistical analysis.

Source: Adopted from (Minichiello et al., 1990:5)

The basis for using a mixed-method approach is larger in both context and logic as the study intends to cheque whether HPWS are conducted and utilized to its optimum in Bangladeshi telecom organisations. A number of reasons can be shown to support this decision. Creswell (2009) determines the importance of the two stages of mixed-method study. First, the enquiry begins with a survey or questionnaire that can generalize the population under study. The second stage allows the researcher to focus more on the details as semi-structured interviews are performed (Creswell, 2009). An assessment is derived from the data collected

and analysed through the quantitative phase. This phase is based on positivism and the motive is to have an in-depth analysis of the variables under study (Sale et al; 2002). Opposing to that, approaches such as interpretivism is more dominant when the researcher conducts the interviews and an interaction occurs (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Designing a mixed-method research has, thus, allowed the researcher to be able to balance her findings from the methods, techniques and procedures of their own choice and purpose (Creswell, 2009).

Combination and comparison of the results of both quantitative and qualitative study shows the presence of strengths in both studies counterbalancing the weaknesses present in them (Creswell and Clark, 2007; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998). Different types of strengths have been found in both studies. In quantitative studies, for example, the impartial invisibility of the researcher during surveys allows the resultant factor to be unguarded and unbiased. Whereas, qualitative researchers believe that the relationship between the researcher and the participant is important and that it adds an understanding of the observable event. Therefore, the researcher obtains valuable insights from spending time with the participant (Bryman and Bell, 1988).

Methods using in both quantitative and qualitative analysis bring forth the strengths in both researcher-participant interaction and the use of research instruments. Predefined tools and instruments such as surveys questionnaires are used in quantitative research. On the opposite, qualitative research means to understand the extents of verbal and non-verbal communications as interviews are conducted and observations are made (Creswell, 2009). This allows the researcher to present what the participants hold true in their minds as no predefined set of responses can bind or standardize their answers. Mixed-method therefore, has the power to shed light and broaden the perspective of the assessment of only one of the methods (Carr, 1994).

4.3 The Quantitative Phase of the Study

The first phase of the study used quantitative methods of data collection and analysis at the organisation level. The study aimed to explore the linkages between HPWS and employee performance from the perspectives of employees using a large sample size gathered from three multinational telecom organisations in Bangladesh. Therefore, deductive approach is used to examine the linkages between HPWS-performance (Table: 4.3). According to Morel and Kwakye (2012) in the deductive approach, the researcher focuses on what is already known or done about the research topic, applies necessary theories in order to generate or guide a hypothesis. The hypothesis is then tested to be confirmed or rejected. Therefore, the quantitative phase of the present study followed the deductive approach and hypotheses have been developed based on employees' perception of HPWS practices in their organisation with the help of a conceptual model and that facilitates the author to support the findings. The unit of analysis of this phase is based on employee individual level rated data.

4.3.1 Survey Instrument Development

Based on the interview with the key informants of the above mentioned organisations, the draught questionnaire for survey was prepared to design for primary data collection. The researcher interviewed senior managers from Human Resources Division (HRD) of three-selected telecom organisations. Three respondents from each organisation were interviewed. The interviews were conducted during regular office hours in their conference room by prior arrangements. The data collected by the researcher were recorded by note taking method in order to remember all the details **(The survey questionnaire is attached in Appendix-1).**

An extensive literature review examined to find out the knowledge gap, gather theories concepts and ideas related to the proposed study. The literature review findings acted as an aid

during the development of the hypotheses, the conceptual model and the questionnaire for the survey.

According to all the important aspects of the conceptual model, the researcher developed the initial interview questions for the key informants (HR managers) of the MNCs. The main purpose of identifying key informants or experts was to locate people who were aware of the existing HPWS and those who would translate the usual HPWS patterns rather than policies in the organisation. Previous researches at the high performing organisations have used HR managers as key informant (Wu and Chaturvedi, 2009). The selection of a small number of HR managers as a key informant helped the researcher to maintain regular contact with them during the entire research period. This was achieved by asking the participants questions related to the present study whilst visiting the organisations which were arranged through informal relationships.

Three selected telecom multinational organisations were visited after establishing informal contacts with the organisations' HR managers, where the researcher tried to get some idea about the suitability of the proposed methodology. The informal discussion with the HR managers revealed that mixed method research approach would be suitable to answer the research questions. The researcher determined that the employees would be a better source of information for the quantitative phase of the study as the employees are direct recipients of the HPWS.

The researcher had established the appropriateness of the HPWS scale before preparing the questionnaire survey by discussing it with the key informant (HR managers) in the three participating telecom organisations. The purpose was to understand what professional managers think, are the HR practices that contribute to better employee performance. These interviews also helped the researcher to understand the adequacy of the questions and the who will be the most appropriate respondents. In addition, the researcher consulted with human

resource management academics at the top level Business schools in Bangladesh located in the capital city Dhaka and second largest city, Chittagong. Based on the discussion and consultation with the academicians including the researcher's PhD supervisor from University of Bolton and other HR practitioners (from Bangladesh), a number of questions were modified and rephrased.

4.3.2 Pilot Study

A pilot study refers to a small scale preliminary test prior to conducting a full scale study to ensure the feasibility, time, expenses and to improve the study design. It is advised that before using survey instrument/questionnaire to collect data, it should be pilot tested. Pilot test aims to clarify the survey questionnaire so that respondents will not encounter any problems whilst answering the questions. In addition, it enables the researchers to get some assessment of the question's validity and reliability of the data is collected. Also prior to pilot testing, it is important to consult HR managers in the field of study or academicians in the relevant field regarding the effectiveness and suitability of the questions (Saunders et al; 2016). In the current study, HR managers in the studied organisations has helped the researcher during the development of survey questionnaire.

A small-scale **pilot survey** was conducted in three selected organisations during the month of July and August 2017 prior to carrying out the actual survey. During the pilot survey, 197 respondents were selected from three the organisations whose head offices were based in Dhaka, Bangladesh. In total, 94 questionnaires were completed and used in the pilot study. A covering letter was attached to the questionnaire explaining the purpose of the survey and ensuring the confidentiality of employee's responses. The participants were given two weeks to return their responses to their HR managers in a sealed envelope. An easily sealable envelope was provided in the questionnaire for maintaining confidentiality. The researcher arranged an informal briefing among the member of staff in small groups that preceded the distribution of questionnaire. The respondents were asked to point out if they did not understand any question

and provided feedback to improve the language and restructure the survey items. Most of the questionnaires with responses were collected personally by this researcher in closed envelopes. The remaining questionnaires were collected a few days later from the HR manager. Based on the employee feedback and recommendations provided at the organisational level, the questionnaires were further refined for use in the final survey. The process of pilot testing provided valuable information with regards to the time and resources needed for the main data collection procedure and estimated the population size. The preliminary analysis of the pilot test provided valuable insights and to ensure validity and reliability issues of the study. (See Appendix - V)

4.3.3 Research Sample and Data Collection

The selection of sample size is an important factor of mixed-method research as one method requires large sample sizes whilst the other requires small sample sizes (Creswell, 2009). In quantitative research large samples are necessary to reach a generalized understanding of the population under study. Therefore, the current study surveyed 320 individual employee level data in the quantitative phase of the study. On the other hand, a successful qualitative study requires an in-depth understanding of a handful of selected people and thus a small number of unique cases is important to obtain a detailed analysis of the research problem in hand (Creswell, 2009). As such, 9 managers as key informant were selected from three organisations for semi-structured interview. However, findings from a qualitative study cannot be generalized to other settings. But using the mixed-method research design comprising of both surveys and selected interviews helps generalize the research conclusions (Creswell, 2009).

In addition, mixed-method research has a number of different designs according to the factors that comprise of it. Factors include the series of events in the data collection or the role that the results from the quantitative and qualitative studies play in response to the question of research (Creswell, 2009). The researcher uses an embedded research design that includes data

from both quantitative and qualitative data where the qualitative analysis supports the finding of the quantitative study. Thus, the researcher believes that the qualitative data from the interview of key informants (managers) and document analysis act as a support for the quantitative findings of the study. The researcher made observation during the field visit and interviewing the managers known as the cross-sectional study design where the researcher collected additional data. Cross-sectional study can be understood from the following quote ‘where researchers collect information about a phenomenon of interest ... at one point in time using some tool – the test – to collect the information’ (Robbins, 2008:56). In this research, cross-sectional data was collected through employees’ survey and interview with managers, which provided a two-fold and complete perception of the varying lengths of service in the organisations in the study. The data has been analysed statistically and through thematic analysis to act as a guide in answering the research question.

The primary objective of the research was to collect data on employee perception of HPWS, employees’ attitude, institutional contexts and employees’ performance outcome. The data were collected from both primary and secondary sources for the present study. The secondary data were already collected from relevant articles, literature, selected texts, websites, newspaper etc. Primary data was collected via face-to-face interview with the key informants of the selected organisations and questionnaire surveys were given to employees who were non-managers. Initially, the researcher made contacts with the HR directors informally. Based on these initial contacts, letters were sent to the HR directors to solicit participation in the study. Face to face interviews and email communications were conducted with HR managers in three selected organisations to explain the nature of the study, data collection procedure and to persuade them to participate. By guaranteeing the confidentiality of information from both the management and the employees, the researcher assured the participants that the data collected will be used for study purposes only. The formal letters to the HR directors also highlighted

that the objective of the survey was to examine employees' perception towards HPWS practices in their organisations.

The sample was purposively selected from non-managerial employees from different work departments, job levels, age groups, and the length of time an employee had been for the organisation. A statistical analysis was made from the responses gathered from the multiple sections of a single organisational unit in order to find the most reliable result that truly captures the existing HPWS in the organisation. The main idea of choosing purposive sampling is researchers' opinion about who can provide the best possible information to achieve the objective of the research. Researchers chooses those people who they think most appropriate to have the necessary information and willing to share it with the researcher. Purposive sampling is useful when a researcher wants to construct a historical reality, describe a phenomenon or develop something which is not widely captured. However, this sampling is more common in qualitative research, but it is also used in quantitative research to predetermine number of people who is the best respondents to provide the needed information for the study (Kumar, 2011). Therefore, in the present study, the researcher purposively selected employee level data for the quantitative phase and conducted interview with the HR managers in the qualitative phase of the study.

This study is confined to capital city of Bangladesh, Dhaka, due to resource limitation. However, approximately 75 percent of the employees are based at head office (HO) and located in the capital city. The responses were voluntary, and not controlled by the researcher. The cover letter also indicated that participation was voluntary. The researcher personally distributed and collected questionnaires from the HR managers in the three organisations to ensure effective handling and responses (Sudman et al; 1965). Follow up telephone calls, personal visits and emails were sent to the HR managers to improve the response rate.

4.3.4 Data Analysis Technique

The study applied Cronbach's alpha test to the research variables i.e., HPWS practices, employees' attitudinal variables, institutional variables and employees' performance to judge the reliability of the data. Cronbach's alpha tests for answers (value) given by the respondents in order to cheque the internal consistency of the scale. An assessment of the normality of data is a prerequisite for many statistical tests because normal data is an underlying assumption in parametric testing. There are two main methods of assessing normality: graphically and numerically. When testing for normality, researchers are mainly interested in the test of normal Normal P-P Plot and the Cook's Distance. As such, test of normality was done to examine whether the data are normally distributed and free from outliers, which can be depicted in Normal P-P Plot and the Cook's Distance.

Furthermore, in order to group the independent variables (questions) into similar set of components or factors, the study conducted exploratory factor analysis (EFA) (Pallant, 2013). As such, the study conducted a scree plot to identify how many factors should be retain for the analysis. Then the study conducted rotated component matrix to pinpoint the loadings of each variable on its respective factors or components. The researcher then conducted correlation to describe the strength and direction of the linear relationship between variables. To determine the factor structure of the data set, the study conducted confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). In order to achieve better model fit, the highest modification indices within the same factors were identified. Afterwards, covariances were established between those errors as they decrease the overall chi square at least by that amount (Byrne, 2016). After completing all the necessary mentioned steps, the study was ready for structural equation model (SEM) to conduct path analysis. The path analysis aim was to offer estimates of the magnitude and significance of hypothesized causal connections between sets of variables. The present study examines the direct and indirect effects between HPWS and its impact on employee performance. In

addition, the study explores how institutional context influences employee attitudes and HPWS practices. As such, this analysis involves moderated and mediation effects. The quantitative data were analysed using structural equation model (SEM) using IBM SPSS AMOS - version 22.

SEM represents the relationship between dependent (unobserved) variable and independent (observed) variables using path diagrams. According to Byrne (2016), SEM is the best technique for such analysis, as this tool can test multiple mediation paths simultaneously. The representation of hypotheses about the mean, variances and covariances of the data in observation as smaller numbers of organisational parameters as defined by a hypothesized underlying model is often said to be a series of methodologies or SEM (Kaplan, 2000). SEM begins with specifying the model, a statistical statement of the relationship among variables that is to be estimated. SEM is a complete statistical tool that can test the hypotheses of the relations among different variables that are observed (Hoyle, 1995).

In addition, Byrne (2016) suggests four major advantages of using SEM over the traditional multivariate procedure. At first, SEM facilitates analysis of data for inferential purposes by demanding that the pattern of inter-variable relations to be specified before which is not possible in the case of exploratory factor analysis. Second, SEM analysis offer exclusive estimates of measurement error variance parameters. By using alternative methods, such as regression, general linear model may lead to serious discrepancies if there is a presence of errors in exploratory variables. Third, SEM analysis can deal with latent and observed variables at the same time. Finally, there is no better software than SEM for multivariate relationship and measuring point of indirect effects.

The above-mentioned facts and benefits motivated the researcher to choose SEM as a data analysis technique for various reasons. First, SEM is one of the most popular statistical methods available to quantitative management researcher as well as in the HPWS research

studies (see for example, Boselie, 2010; Mao et al; 2013; Muduli et al; 2016; Obiedat et al; 2016). Second, the researcher needed to test complex (i.e; direct, mediated and moderated) hypotheses in order to explore the relationship among variables. Finally, there was a need to conduct a series of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) for the data to ensure the model fit. In order to achieve this target, SEM provides a means of controlling not only extraneous variables but for measurement error as well (Hoyle, 1995). Prior to conducting the actual SEM analysis, the researcher followed some of the steps in order to carry out the actual analysis. For example, Cronbach's alpha, test of normality, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) were conducted to get the valid quantitative results. In addition, missing data, outliers, and logical cheques were performed at the first level.

4.4 Qualitative phase of the study

The second phase of the study is based on qualitative methods. Therefore, inductive approach is used to validate the quantitative findings of the study. According to Morel and Kwakye (2012), inductive approach starts to seek for a pattern based on researcher's observations and the development of explanations to draw a conclusive theory. (Table-4.3). Thematic analysis is considered as a type of qualitative study. This analysis is useful to make classification and themes that communicated through the research data (Alhojailan, 2012). In the present research, thematic approach is used to analyse the qualitative findings. Based on the quantitative findings, the researcher developed a self-designed interview questions for the managers for the qualitative phase of the study. Therefore, the unit of analysis of this phase was based on managerial perception based on the quantitative findings of the study.

Three key informants (HR managers) were selected from each of the three studied organisations. Through information from the HR department of the selected organisations, the informants were then contacted for face-to-face interviews with voluntary consent at a specified place and convenient time. Upon signing a consent form and having been granted the

permission to record, three key informants were interviewed at once. During the interview session, the researcher got the opportunity for reviewing relevant HR documents such annual reports, performance appraisal forms and job satisfaction surveys. Findings from the HR documentation and the transcriptions of the recorded interviews assisted the researcher to make field observations that added more to generate the qualitative findings and analysis.

4.4.1 Data collection and analysis technique

Qualitative data collection mostly depends on the interpretations, due to the large amount of data are often collected by the researchers. Therefore, there is no difference between data collection and analysis and often there is an overlap of analysis and interpretations (Cohen et al., 2011; Alhojailan, 2012).

The qualitative data sorted manually by the researcher into separate Microsoft Word files so that more control can be exercised upon them. Manual work makes sure that the data analysis actually addresses the researched questions and that all relevant evidence and possible alternatives in interpretations were examined fully (Auld et al., 2007). This also ensured a fair treatment of all the data (Yin, 2009). In addition, by doing everything manually a thorough revision allows the researcher to better understand the context and develop patterns in the concept (Auld et al., 2007:37). Thematic approach facilitates researcher by providing opportunities to code and categorize data into themes (Alhojailan, 2012). For example, in the present study, quantitative findings indicated that HPWS positively influences employee performance via employee's positive attitude. In the case of thematic analysis, processed data were classified according to quantitative findings. Therefore, the transcribed interviews allowed the researcher to develop coding categories from the responses of the interviewees. The researcher reported the qualitative findings and analysis in Chapter 6.

4.5 Validity and Reliability

According to Creswell (2009), one of the prime concerns regarding validity and reliability of mixed method research is executing both quantitative and qualitative data when answering the research question. Therefore, the researcher used survey questionnaire which is validated by the HR academicians and expert comments from the concerned industry. In addition, pilot study conducted to test for any weaknesses in the survey questionnaire (Collis and Hussey, 2009).

In selecting relevant scales there were mainly two factors that needed to be considered, i.e; validity and reliability. These factors can influence the quality of the data gathered through measurement scales. In the quantitative phase of the study, reliability was estimated using a technique of Cronbach alpha test. Composite reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) are two indicators that can test whether the data in the confirmatory factor analysis are reliable and valid. Composite reliability (CR) can be considered less biased in the estimation of reliability in comparison to Cronbach's Alpha. Average Variance Extracted (AVE), on the other hand, quantifies the level of variance set against the level that is due to a measurement error (Alarcón and Sánchez, 2015). AVE should be > 0.5 and CR should be > 0.7 as per the results of the reliability and validity tests (Gaskin, 2011). The conceptual model of the study satisfied the above conditions and satisfied both the reliability and validity conditions. Whilst in the qualitative phase of the study validates and supports the quantitative findings of the study.

4.6 Ethical Considerations

This research is conducted in accordance with University of Bolton Business School's code of conduct for ensuring ethical research. The Business School's ethics committee officially approved the research. Therefore, the study takes into ethical issues in considerations before and after the research is undertaking. At first, the researcher maintained the respondent's identities confidential in the selected organisations (Bryman, and Bell, 2011). In order to maintain confidentiality, the participants' names were not mentioned in the research. Also, to determine research respondents, the researcher contacted the HR managers beforehand to inform them about the pilot study and to participate in the study. The respondents were also informed that their participation is voluntary and they had the right to withdraw at any time.

4.7 Research Context: HRM in Bangladesh

As a result of globalization South Asian countries, in particular Bangladesh, have seen a rapid growth. The presence of foreign investments demanded that efficient HRM practices be carried out in organisations (Miah and Hossain, 2014). Past researches suggest that a number of studies have been conducted to examine and explore the HRM practices of host countries through subsidiaries in multinational companies (Ramirez and Mabey, 2005; Choudhury and Mahmood, 2012; Demirbag et al., 2014). It has been seen that the western HRM practices cannot be adapted equally in all the countries. As multinational organisations are flaring in the developing countries, it has been a global issue that the organisations can break through the general restraints in order to practice their own HRM practices (Miah and Hossain, 2014).

The current situation of HRM practices is far below the level Bangladeshi organisations need to achieve (Mahmood and Absar, 2015). In Bangladesh, an HRM practice used to be predominantly resemble those of personnel management practices or traditional HRM in which the HRM managers were limited to administrative duties and other legal matters rather than on the interaction between HRM and strategy (Mahmood and Baimukhamedova, 2013; Absar and

Mahmood, 2015). These phenomena have also been observed in many other developing and emerging economies (Budhwar and Debrah, 2001; Mahmood and Baimukhamedova, 2013). Recent years have seen the pressure from EU and North American countries for the export industries and labor-intensive organisations about the maintenance of their labor rights standards and a development of their working conditions. This outside pressure from other countries required bringing changes in the organisations corporate culture and HRM practices in Bangladesh (Mahmood and Absar, 2015). Further studies indicated progress in terms of strategic HRM practice has captured top priority in Bangladeshi organisations (Absar et al; 2014; Khan, 2013, Mahmood and Absar, 2015). Many of the large corporate organisations have been known to have established a complete HRM department by recruiting experienced HRM professionals. A number of organisations have created and upgraded the position of HRM managers and incorporated the HRM head in the corporate board of organisations (Mahmood and Absar, 2015).

For the past two decades, remarkable developments in the field of telecommunication have made the world a 'Global Village' (Abdullah et al; 2011:196). Globalized economy has opened the door of opportunities to cross their national boundaries, expand their market share and enhance efficiency. The multinational organisations HR managers face a dilemma in maintaining the balance between global HRM practices as well as requirements of local subsidiaries in Bangladesh. Studies indicated that HRM practices in Bangladesh are also influenced by multinationals operating in the country (Abdullah et al; 2011; Chowdhury and Mahmood, 2012). As pointed out by Osterman (1994), multinational companies often experience an increased level of internationalization and encounter more complex situation. For example, diverse customer attitude, complicated consumer demands as well as different placement channels. These factors put pressure on organisations to adopt HPWS practices to accomplish their goals.

Multinational organisations have been operating in Bangladesh for a long time and the financial performance are much higher than those of local competitors (Absar and Mahmood, 2015). As such, MNCs are role models in order to develop a systematic HRM practices and leading domestic organisations in Bangladesh are trying to imitate their practices (Chowdhury and Mahmood, 2012). In addition, it is significant to understand the role of strategic HRM practices (HPWS) in the organisations as a source of competitive advantage. However, owing to institutional and cultural differences discussed in the previous chapters, the efficacy of the HRM practices for MNC's in Bangladesh has been an interesting context to study in the case of three leading telecom MNCs operating in Bangladesh. Bangladesh is the ideal country to be studied because in terms of the associations between high performance working system (HPWS) and employee performance for number of reasons. Firstly, Bangladesh is characterized by collectivism, high power distance and high uncertainty avoidance (Abdullah et al; 2011) that largely account for organisational practices, such as nepotism, corruption and centralization that some studies identifies as traits of Bangladeshi culture (Chowdhury and Mahmood, 2012). Second, it can be argued that in many emerging countries like Bangladesh, organisations are deeply rooted in their traditional authoritarian patriarchal approaches to their management practices. Therefore, Bangladesh represents a very interesting site to explore how western HPWS impact on employee performance outcome in multinational company (MNC)'s where traditional authoritarian-patriarchal approaches remain deeply embedded (Miah et al; 2001). These characteristics may hinder the adoption and efficacy of HPWS practices in the organisations. Finally, findings of the study will also help the concerned organisations, HR practitioners and decision makers to improve the HR policies and practices to enhance employees' perceptions towards the management, which in turn will enhance their performance.

Ernest and Young LLP and the Bangladesh Society for Human Resource Management (BSHRM) conducted a survey jointly in 2014 on HRM practices in Bangladesh. The survey was based on approximately one thousand HRM managers from different sectors of the

economy. The highlights of the survey outcome may help understanding the partial scenario of HRM in Bangladesh (Mahmood and Absar, 2015). (See Box-I).

HRM in Bangladesh – A few highlights (BOX-1)

About 33 per cent of organisations used internal referral and word of mouth in the employee recruitment process. Use of social media and mobile applications are very limited (i.e., less than 10 per cent) in the recruitment process.

Around 40 per cent of the organisations use formal background or reference cheque in the selection process.

About one-third of the organisations indicated outsourcing recruitment process sometimes in the past to recruitment managerial employees.

More than 25 per cent of the organisations do not conduct training need analysis and do not provide training to employees on regular basis.

Performance appraisals indicators include mostly functional achievements rather than behavioural aspects of the job. However, IT and telecommunications sectors are leading to introduce structured performance appraisal system and employee training need identification process.

More than 55 per cent of the organisations do not have any defined employee reward and recognition programme. However, 66 per cent organisations of first moving consumer goods, pharmaceuticals sectors and telecommunications sectors reported to have short-term incentive programmes.

About 95 per cent of the organisations do not provide long-term incentives to retain employees.

About 75 per cent of the organisations have structured mechanisms to deal with the employee grievances.

About 30 per cent of the organisations reported to have preventive mechanisms to avoid employee conflicts.

Source: Daily Star, 2 February 2014; Mahmood and Absar, (2015:183).

4.8 Rationale for Choosing Telecom Service Sector

Although Bangladesh has been categorized as a developing country, recently a number of significant changes have been observed in the economic arena since the country has been aligned with the globalization process. For example, increased access to capital inflow and technology, availability of goods and services at lower costs and employment opportunity are

remarkable benefits for the economy of Bangladesh. Multinational companies have been expanding their operations to developing countries, looking for new markets and allowing these countries to participate in the global economy. (Sarker, 2010; Chowdhury and Mahmood, 2012).

The rapid spread of the use of information and communication technology (ICT) around the world is both an outcome and a determinant of the process of globalization. It has dramatically facilitated technological latecomers to have access to this set of connections, which in turn provides a unique opportunity for developing countries to raise per capita income. Research indicates that improved access to technology is also improving the demand for skilled human capital in many developing countries (Mahmood and Absar, 2015). In Bangladesh, telecom sector has captured top priority for foreign investment and is a source of government revenues (Sarkar, 2010; Zamil and Hossen, 2012). Growth in mobile penetration in Bangladesh has exceeded all expectations. Minimising the digital gap by providing access to digital devices such as mobile phone and internet facilities have enabled access to knowledge and services from around the world in such a way that was unthinkable few years ago. Low cost digital devices facilitated access to internet and mobile phones for the country's lower income citizens (Sarkar, 2010). The study focuses on telecom sector of Bangladesh, which has recently attracted several researchers due to its significant contribution to economy of the country (Sarkar, 2010; Zamil and Hossen, 2012; Rima and Islam, 2013; Akbar, 2008). The following (Table 4.4) represents top three mobile organisational profile in Bangladesh chosen for the purpose of the research.

Table 4.4: The organisational profile

Key features	Org-A	Org--B	Org-C
Employee size (Numbers)	3638	3456	1300
Market share (subscribers' base)	55.20	32.2	25
Subscribers (in millions)	54.5	35.2	32.9
Key Achievement	Best Employer Award	Awards in Global HR strategy, Talent Management, & Best HR strategy	Awards in Good governance & Emerging HR strategy
HPWS practices	In place	In place	In place

Source: www.btrc.gov.bd, 2018.

According to global system for mobile communication (GSMA) intelligence, mobile technologies and services generated 6.2 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) in 2015, a contribution that amounted to around US\$13 billion of economic value. In addition, the mobile sector will create more employment opportunities from 780,000 jobs in 2016 to 850,000 jobs in 2020, an increase of around nine percent during that period (Economic impact: Bangladesh Mobile Industry, 2017).

Previous studies adopted different theoretical framework to establish link between HPWS practices and employee performance (Macky and Boxall, 2007; Lawler et al., 2011; Muduli et al; 2016). It is evident that majority of strategic HRM researcher has focused manufacturing sector, neglecting the importance of other sectors (Katou et al; 2014; Akhter et al., 2016; Mansour et al; 2013), in particular the service sector. The reason behind this issue is the fact that studies related to manufacturing sector cannot be generated to the service sector due to its diverse nature, such as, the intangibility of service practices and outcomes, the concurrent production and consumption of products, the customer's involvement in services delivery etc.

(Liao et al., 2009). As such, these factors required further research initiatives from service sector.

Organisations are supposed to design a work system that can guarantee that their employees have the appropriate set of knowledge, abilities and other necessary skills along with motivation so that the front-line managers can provide high-quality service and meet the customers' needs (Liao et al., 2009). As service employees can be more flexible in comparison to their manufacturing counterparts, and also it is a critical consequence of HPWS to stimulate employees and exercise more discretionary effort (Rosenthal et al; 1997). The service sector employees' closeness to customers is another important reason. Therefore, influence of the HPWS adoption can be found directly on the service quality of the employees through their attitudes and behavior (Batt, 2002). Another crucial reason is that the efficiency of HPWS on productivity is higher in the industries with a low capital intensity. Thus, these industries are more likely to have services where customer contact is common and discretionary behavior is high (Datta et al., 2005). Hence, service organisations provides a unique context to examine how HPWS influences individual employee performance which in turn impact employee performance.

Moreover, Resource Based View (RBV) argues that knowledge intensive industries may be more applicable to use HPWS practices as a means of gaining competitive advantage than labour intensive industries (Barney, 1991; Fu, 2013; Fu et al., 2015). The service quality literature suggests that in order to deliver high levels of customer quality, organisation must identify, measure, and manage its internal resources that it produces. In the service sector, there is a close link between employee outcomes (e.g. job satisfaction) and customer service (e.g. customer satisfaction) (Uddin et al; 2016). Also, the impacts of HPWS on employee behaviour directly affect the quality of services, as service industry employees maintain close

contact with their customers (Khan, 2015; Aryee et al., 2012). Going the extra mile in service sector is closely related to customer care and therefore it is worthwhile pursuing.

In addition, there are a number of reasons as to why Bangladeshi service organisations encourage and value HPWS practices. As discussed in earlier paragraphs, Bangladesh is currently becoming more market-oriented and the present economy is emerging and integrating with the world economy. The only way to develop their individual and organisational performance is by adopting and implementing HPWS practices (Khan, 2015; Uddin et al; 2016, Rubel et al., 2018). This is another important reason for choosing telecom sector in Bangladesh as a research context. It is worthwhile to mention that, in the local context, the telecom sector is considered as a knowledge-intensive industry, rather than labour intensive in Bangladesh (Rima and Islam, 2013). Moreover, the MNCs in Bangladesh generally implemented western HPWS and their effectiveness have been established with their actual execution. Therefore, Bangladeshi organisations have translated these western style HPWS practices into their actual implementation. Lastly, Bangladeshi organisations now promote young leaders as they are more willing to adopt these modern management styles and implement in the organisation.

In this chapter, the author discussed about research paradigm. The current research is based on pragmatism paradigm which refers to mixed method research. Due to complex nature of the present research context, the mixed method research was discussed to understand how different variables in the study relate to each other which in turn allows an in-depth analysis. Therefore, the chapter provided an overview of the quantitative and qualitative phase of the study mode and the data collection and analysis of each phase.

In the quantitative phase of the study, the conceptual model is tested using structural equation model (SEM) with the help of using IBM SPSS software version 21. The survey comprised of 320 employee-level data set from three selected multinational (MNC) telecom organisations operating in Bangladesh. The qualitative phase of the study used to verify quantitative findings and provide insights that were difficult to gain by surveys alone. This phase of research examines manager's perception of HPWS in the studied organisations based on a sample of 9 semi-structured interviews.

The research validity and reliability are also discussed. The researcher has also emphasized the importance of ethics. Finally, the chapter has discussed in detail the research context – Bangladesh and rationale for choosing service sector. Overview of three chosen multinationals were presented to understand the nature of HPWS practices in the studied organisation and the context. Next chapter discusses the quantitative phase of the study followed by analysis and discussion.

Chapter 5

Quantitative Findings and Discussion

Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher provides the results of the quantitative data. The findings from questionnaire survey has been analysed by using AMOS version 21. The chapter describes the contents of the survey questionnaire and measures of the variables used in the study. To summarize the demographic information of the respondents, the descriptive statistics were used to summarize the respondent's age, gender, years in the service, educational qualification and so forth. The chapter also presents the internal consistency of the data computed through reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha value. To examine whether the data are normally distributed and free from outliers, the study conducted the test of normality. Then the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) were carried out and it is a technique within factor analysis whose overarching goal is to identify similar sets of factors or components that have inter-correlations among their own set of variables.

The researcher then conducted correlation to describe the strength and direction of the linear relationship between variables. To determine the factor structure of the data set, the study then conducted confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Finally, the researcher conducted Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) which represents the relationship between dependent (unobserved) variable and independent (observed) variables using path diagrams explained followed by discussion. The researcher also used sobel test to find out the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable through mediation analysis. The study also applied moderating analysis to see how an independent variable affects the direction of the relationship between a dependent and independent variable. The chapter concludes with quantitative result findings and analysis.

5.1 Contents of the Survey Instruments

The survey questionnaire is divided into five major sections: HPWS measures (fifteen items), employee attitudinal outcomes (nine items), institutional context (six items), employees' performance (six items) and employees' demographic information. (Appendix-2).

A 7-point Likert scale is used to measure responses because this scale effects resultant data and generates relatively higher mean scores compared to a 10-point Likert scale (Dawes, 2008). On a 7-point scale; 1 represents strongly disagree, 2 represents disagree, 3 represents somewhat disagree, 4 represents neither agree nor disagree, 5 represents somewhat agree, 6 represents agree, and 7 represents strongly disagree. The questionnaire was conducted in English. The population of the study is highly educated executives, most of whom are business and IT graduates. English is the most commonly used language for all forms of communications in multinational companies (MNCs) in Bangladesh. In addition, in view of the education level of the respondents, there was no need to translate the questionnaire into Bengali, which is the native language of Bangladesh.

5.2 Measures

HPWS: This study considered four major components of HPWS practices: recruitment and selection (RNS), performance appraisal (PA), compensation and benefit (COMP), and communication and information sharing (INF). Based on the previous empirical study, the study used 15 items to assess employees' perception of HPWS using four major HR practices aimed at improving employees' ability, motivation, and opportunity (AMO) to perform. Sample questions include 'Decisions such as promotions, pay increases and training are linked with my performance appraisal', 'It is easy for me to communicate my thoughts to management' and 'The recruitment and selection practices in this organisation are based on selective screening'. Cronbach's alpha for HPWS was 0.940, which is above the critical value of 0.70 (Pallant,

2013:92). Hence, a strong correlation exists between the subscales (RNS, TND, PA, COMP, INF) of HPWS.

Initially, the study considered five aspects of HPWS, including training and development (TND). However, while conducting the confirmatory factor analysis in the fourth stage of analysis, it was found that this (TND) variable does not meet the reliability and validity conditions. Hence, this component was excluded.

Institutional Context: Institutional context questions focused on measuring employees' shared perception of power inequality, nepotism and favouritism within the organisation. There were six questions in this section, and the intercorrelations between them were strong ($\alpha = .960$) (Pallant, 2013: 92). Sample statements were, 'In work-related matters, managers have a right to expect obedience from their subordinates' and 'Favouritism is not evident in the organisation'.

Employees' attitudes: Employees' attitudes were measured using a 9-item scale that describes various aspects of employees' attitudinal variables such as job satisfaction, affective commitment and trust in management. For example, employees' job satisfaction (JS) questions were measured with a 3-item scale. A sample question is, 'I feel my performance appraisal is fair and unbiased in the organisation'. An affective commitment (AC) sample question was 'This organisation has a great deal of personal meaning to me'. To measure trust in management, a sample statement was, 'I feel a strong sense of loyalty towards my supervisor and perform well in my job'. Cronbach's alpha for employees' attitudinal variables was 0.891, indicating a strong internal consistency between these questions (Pallant, 2013: 92).

Employees' performance: A 6-item scale was used to measure employees' performance. The alpha value for this variable was 0.876, indicating good internal consistency between the subscales (Pallant, 2013:92). A sample statement on the concept of ability

enhancing is, 'The development of teamwork among employees is encouraged in this organisation'. There is a difference between perceived HR practices and implemented HR practices. Therefore, the motivation-enhancing questions were built on ideas of fair performance appraisal and higher compensation and benefits. For example, the specific statement is, 'Do you receive performance appraisal and informal feedback from your manager every 12 months?' and 'Do you think your compensation and benefits are competitive compared to other MNCs in Bangladesh?' Likewise, to measure opportunity-enhancing practices, which reflect communication and information sharing practices, statements such as, 'Management involves employees in decisions related to overall organisational level performance' were used. Finally, we calculated the alpha value for all four sections (HPWS, institutional context, employees' attitudes and employees' performance) and generated an overall alpha value. The result shows that there is a strong internal consistency with these variables ($\alpha = .920$). Since all the individual sections of the questionnaire have alpha values greater than 0.7 (should be < 0.7) and the overall questionnaire has an alpha value of 0.920 (should be < 0.7) (Pallant, 2013:92), the questionnaire has good internal consistency for conducting further analysis.

5.3 Results

In this chapter, the researcher provides the results of the quantitative data. The Sample size chosen for the study is $n=320$. The data was first entered into an excel files and exported into IBM SPSS 21.0 version. Thus, using SPSS software the present study results analysed. Missing data, outliers, and logical cheques performed at first level. The data were gathered through self-administered survey and were encoded into the computer to conduct various statistical calculations with the help of software tools such as SPSS and Amos. The study conducts the following statistical calculations to generate valid findings.

5.3.1 Demographic Information

Table 5.1: Frequency for Age group.

Age group	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
20-30	38	11.875
31-40	204	63.75
41-50	68	21.25
Above 50	10	3.125
Total	320	100

Source: High Performance Work System (HPWS), 2017.

The following Table 5.1 reveals the age group of the respondents. Majority 63.75 percent of the respondents were 31-40 years followed by 21.25 percent were 41-50 years, 11.9 percent were 20-30 years and least 3.1 percent were above 50 years respectively.

Table 5.2: Frequency for qualification.

Qualification	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
MBA	273	85.3125
Master's	10	3.125
Bachelor's	10	3.125
IT & Telecommunication Engineering	27	8.4375
Total	320	100

Source: High Performance Work System (HPWS), 2017.

Table 5.2 presents the qualification of the respondent. Majority 85 percent were MBA, followed by 8 percent were graduate from IT & Telecommunication engineering, 3 percent were both Master's and Bachelor's.

Table 5.3: Frequency for Experience.

Experience	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Less than 5 yrs.	5	1.5625
6 to 8 yrs.	40	12.5
10 to 15 yrs.	115	35.9375
Above 15 yrs.	160	50
Total	320	100

Source: High Performance Work System (HPWS), 2017.

Table 5.3 shows the experience of the respondent. Majority 50 percent of the respondents were above 15 years followed by 36 percent were 10 to 15 years, 12.5 percent were 6 to 8 years and least 2 percent were less than 5 years respectively.

Table 5.4: Frequency for Department.

Department	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Customer Service	65	20.3125
Finance	46	14.375
Technology/IT	40	12.5
Marketing	50	15.625
Human Resource	45	14.0625
Audit	32	10
Operation	32	10
Other	10	3.125
Total	320	100

Source: High Performance Work System (HPWS), 2017.

Table 5.4 reveals the department of the respondents. Majority 20 percent of the respondents were belong to customer service, followed by 15 percent were Marketing, 14 percent were belong to both Finance and human resource, 12.5 percent were Technology/IT, 10 percent were both audit and operation and least 3 percent were belong to other department.

Table 5.5: Frequency for Gender

Gender	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Male	175	54.6875
Female	145	45.3125
Total	320	100

Source: *High Performance Work System (HPWS)*, 2017.

Table 5.5 present the gender of the respondents. Majority 54.6 percent of the respondents were 'Male', while 45.4 percent were 'Female'.

5.3.2 Cronbach's Alpha

To cheque the reliability of the quantitative data of the research, it is important to cheque the Alpha value. Cronbach Alpha is frequently used by researchers when they want to measure the internal consistency of a survey questionnaire that is made up of number of Likert type questions and scales. Therefore, the present study chequeed the internal consistency of the questionnaire by conducting Cronbach's alpha test. The overall alpha value of the study's data was 0.920, which was above the acceptable value of 0.7 (Pallant, 2013). The individual section of the questionnaire also confirmed the acceptable alpha value. Hence, the study confirmed that the scale regarding the questionnaire of the study has a good internal consistency.

Table 5.6: Cronbach's Alpha value for both overall and individual section of data.

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha
Overall data	0.920
Individual section of data	
HPWS	0.904
Employee attitude	0.891
Institutional Context	0.960
Employee Performance	0.876

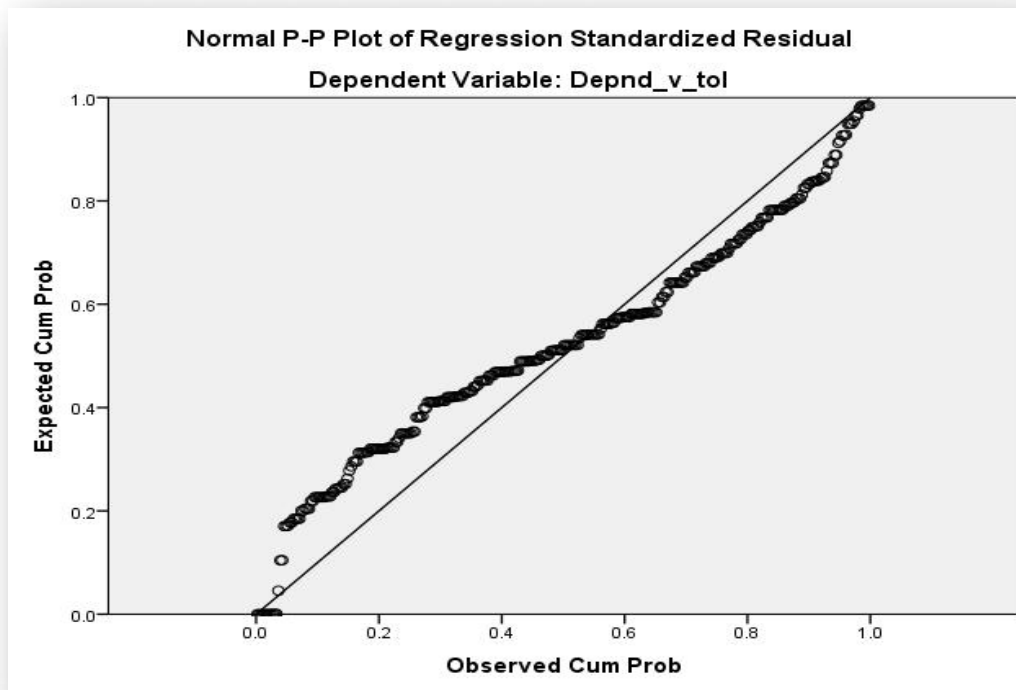
Source: *High Performance Work System (HPWS)*, 2017.

Table 5.6 indicates that the alpha value of the overall data (all sections of the study's questionnaire) was 0.920, which was above the acceptable value of 0.7 (Pallant, 2013).

5.3.3 Test of Normality

An assessment of the normality of data is a prerequisite for many statistical tests because normal data is an underlying assumption in parametric testing. There are two main methods of assessing normality: graphically and numerically. When testing for normality, the researcher is mainly interested in the **Normal P-P Plot** and the **Cook's Distance** as graphical and numerical methods to test for the normality of data, respectively.

Figure 4: Normal P-P plot



The study then generated the value of Cook's distance using SPSS. (See table 5.7). In this stage, the study conducted the test of normality to cheque if the data were gathered from the same population, were normally distributed and were free of outliers (Pallant, 2013). Then a normal P-P plot was drawn, with the result that the dataset reflects a reasonably straight diagonal line from bottom left to the top. This indicates that the P-P plot has no major deviations from normality (Pallant, 2013:150).

Table 5.7: Table showing the result of Cook's Distance Residuals Statistics^a

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Predicted Value	25.8532	38.6423	33.7156	3.11161	320
Std. Predicted Value	-2.527	1.583	.000	1.000	320
Standard Error of Predicted Value	.197	.536	.269	.072	320
Adjusted Predicted Value	25.7313	38.6716	33.7188	3.10736	320
Residual	-21.89205	7.59872	.00000	3.51554	320
Std. Residual	-6.217	2.158	.000	.998	320
Stud. Residual	-6.227	2.180	.000	1.004	320
Deleted Residual	-21.96090	7.75733	-.00313	3.55258	320
Stud. Deleted Residual	-6.635	2.194	-.004	1.022	320
Mahal. Distance	.000	6.385	.997	1.176	320
Cook's Distance	.000	.160	.005	.020	320
Centered Leverage Value	.000	.020	.003	.004	320

Source: High performance work system (HPWS), 2017

This particular test identifies whether the data include any strange cases and undue influences on the result as a whole. Based on the statistics of the test, the study has a maximum value of 0.160 (should be > 1) (Pallant, 2013:152). Tabachnick and Fidell (2001) is cited in Pallant, (2013) that cases in Cook's distance with values larger than 1 are a potential problem. The above residual statistics' table 7 shows that in the data the maximum value of Cook's distance is .160, suggesting no major problems (Pallant, 2013: 152) in the data set.

Table 5.8: Results of the test of normality

Test of Normality	Pass
Normal P-P plot	√
Cook's distance	√

Source: High Performance Work System (HPWS),2017.

Table 5.8 summarizes the test of normality. The table indicates that the data of this study have passed the normal P-P Plot and Cook's distance tests. Therefore, the researcher infers that the data of this study are normally distributed.

5.3.4 Exploratory factor analysis (EFA)

Factor analysis allows the researchers to condense a large number of data set to a smaller and manageable number of dimensions. The technique condenses the underlying patterns of correlation and groups the items closely related to each other. This technique is used when developing measures and scales to pinpoint the necessary structure. There are two approaches of factor analysis such as exploratory and confirmatory. Exploratory factor analysis used in the early stages of research to collect important data about the interconnection between sets of variables. On the other hand, confirmatory factor analysis is a more sophisticated techniques used in the present study later to test the set of hypotheses related to study variables (Pallant, 2013).

In the light of the above, the third stage of analysis conducted KMO and Bartlett's test to cheque if the dataset is appropriate for factor analysis. The data of the study have a KMO value of 0.836 (should be $< .6$) and a p value of Bartlett's test of 0.00 (should be $p < .05$). Therefore, the dataset is appropriate for factor analysis. Next, the study conducted exploratory factor analysis (EFA), which groups the independent variable into similar sets of components or factors (Pallant, 2013:172). The following rotated component matrix shows the Cronbach's alpha, factor loadings, and composite reliability of study's variables.

Table 5.9: Cronbach's α , factor loading and composite reliability

Item	Cronbach's α	Factor loading	CR	AVE
High Performance work system	0.904			
Recruitment and Selection			0.822	0.61
The recruitment & selection practices in this organisation are based on selective screening.		0.469		
In our organisation, line managers and HR managers participate in hiring process.		0.504		
All recruitment in this organisation are based on merit (i.e. the best person for the job is selected regardless of their personal characteristics).		0.363		
Performance Appraisal			0.883	0.717
I receive regular feedback from my manager on how well I do my job.		0.771		
Performance appraisal is reviewed in accordance with organisational goals and needs.		0.751		
Decision such as promotions, pay increase and training are linked with my performance appraisal		0.81		
Compensation			0.877	0.703
In our organisation compensation is decided on the basis of competence of the employee.		0.76		
I receive Performance bonus for the high performance of my department.		0.697		
Organisation provides competitive pay packages to all employees.		0.681		
Communication and information sharing			0.846	0.647
Employees at different levels within the organisation are encouraged to interact with each other.		0.629		
Employee suggestions are implemented in full or in part within the organisation		0.734		
It is easy for me to communicate my thoughts to management.		0.712		

Source: *High performance work system (HPWS), 2017*

Table 5.9 indicates that the Cronbach's α of all sections of the study's questionnaire was above the acceptable value of 0.7 (Pallant, 2013). It also shows the loadings of each variable on its respective five factors that are statistically significant at $p < 0.01$. According to

the reliability and validity tests, CR should be > 0.7 and AVE should be > 0.5 (Gaskin, 2011). Table 5.9 further shows that the all the values of the CR are > 0.7 and the values of AVE are > 0.5 . Hence, the model also satisfies both the reliability and validity conditions.

5.3.5 Correlation Analysis

At this stage the study conducted correlation analysis to describe the strength and direction of the linear relationship between variables (Pallant, 2013). The correlation analysis shows the linearity between the variables not the strength of association between dependent and independent variables represented by r and p value, while r is degree of correlation and p signifies significance level.

Table 5.10: Descriptive Statistics and Pearson's Correlations

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
HPWS	5.6096	.70441	1			
Employee Attitude	5.6503	.72762	.765**	1		
Institutional Context	4.2203	1.80351	-.019	-.016	1	
Employee Performance	5.6193	.78247	.598**	.679**	.089	1

Notes $n = 320^{**}$. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: High Performance Work System (HPWS), 2017.

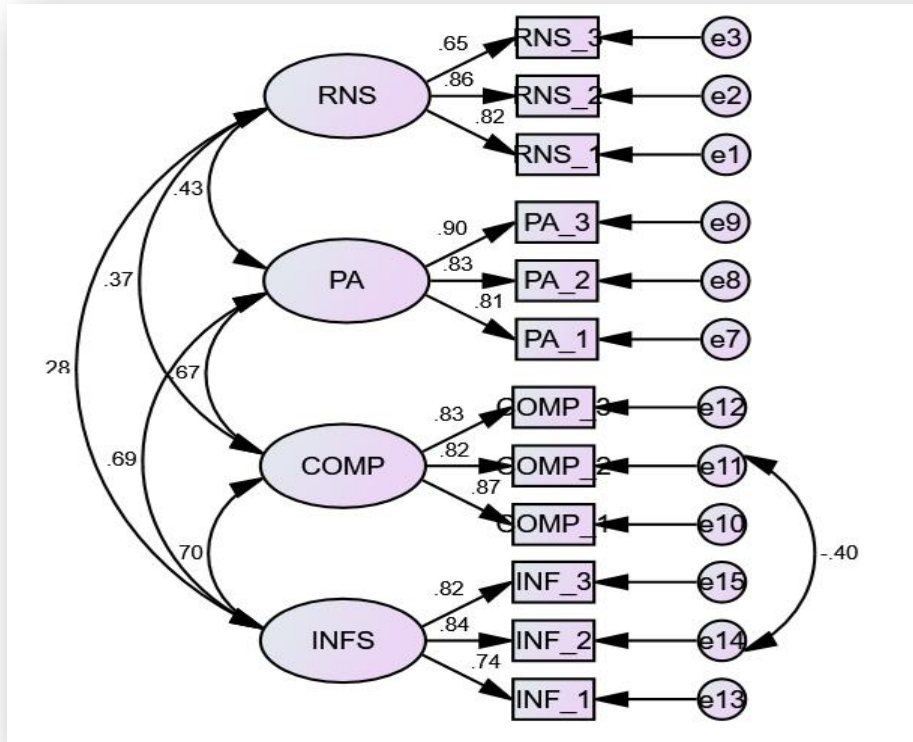
The above table 5.10 represents the direction of the linear relationship between the variables. Apart from Institutional context, all other correlation values are positive, meaning when one increase other also increases. Hence there is a positive relationship between HPWS practices and institutional context, employee attitude and employee performance. However, there is a negative relationship between Institutional context and all other variables such as HPWS, employee attitude and employee performance.

5.3.6 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Although EFA stage included training and development HR practices in HPWS dimension, however this independent variable has been removed from the analysis because of

the low employee response rate. In addition, while conducting analysis, it has been found that this variable (TND) does not meet the reliability and validity concern of CFA.

Figure 5: The CFA model



Source: *High Performance Work System (HPWS)*, 2017.

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) (i.e; figure 6) was conducted in the fourth stage of the study to test the relationship between the observed variables and their underlying latent constructs (Suhr, 2006). While conducting CFA, the study also confirmed the model fit.

Table 5.11: The initial model fit summary (CFA model)

Fit Statistics	Acceptable threshold levels	Obtained
X^2	Low X^2 relative to df	127.369
Df		47
P	0.00 accepted for large sample size	.000
X^2/df	Between 2 to 5	2.710

CFI	>0.95	.964
NNFI (TLI)	>0.95	.950
RMSEA	> 0.05 but not < 0.08	.073

Source: *High Performance Work System (HPWS), 2017.*

Table 5.11 indicates that the study obtained $X^2 = 127.369$ (should be low X^2 relative to df), $df = 47$, $p = .000$ (0.00 accepted for large sample size), $X^2/df = 2.710$ (should be between 2 to 5), CFI = .964 (should be >0.95), NNFI (TLI) = .950 (should be >0.95) and RMSEA = .073 (should be > 0.05 but not < 0.08), all of which suggest a good model fit (Arbuckle, 2013; Gaskin, 2011).

At this stage, the study also confirmed the reliability and validity by generating average variance extracted (AVE) and composite reliability (CR). Reliability of a scale suggests that data set is free from the random error. Whereas, the validity scales suggest to the point to which it measures what it is supposed to measure. AVE measures the level of variance captured by a construct versus the level due to measurement error, and CR is a less biased estimate of reliability than Cronbach's alpha (Alarcón et al., 2015).

Table 5.12: Reliability and validity analysis

	CR	AVE	MSV	Max R(H)	COMP	RAS	PA	CAIS
COMP	0.877	0.703	0.487	0.879	0.839			
RAS	0.822	0.610	0.188	0.849	0.372	0.781		
PA	0.883	0.717	0.476	0.893	0.667	0.434	0.847	
CAIS	0.846	0.647	0.487	0.853	0.698	0.281	0.690	0.804

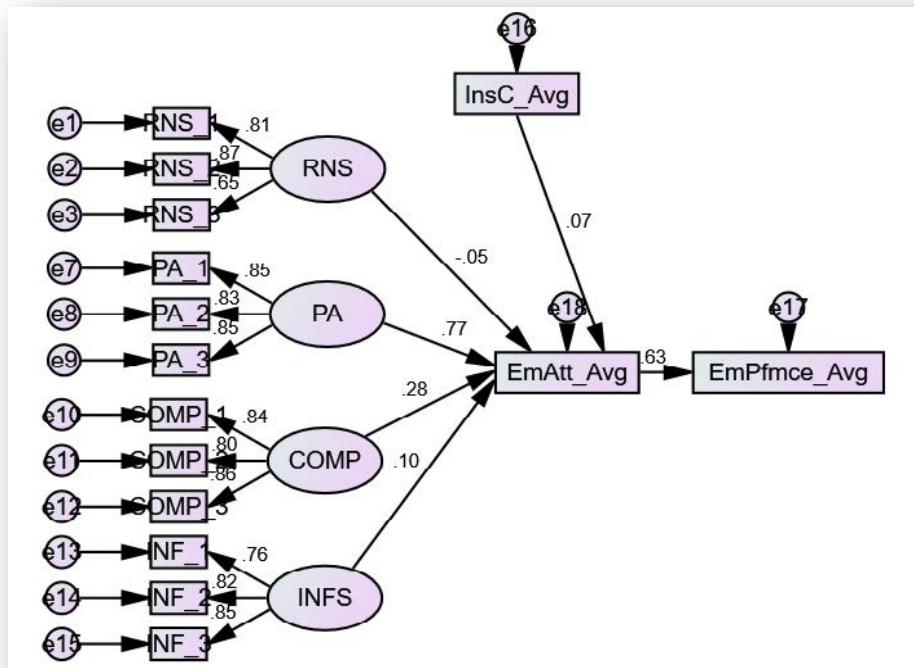
Source: *High Performance Work System (HPWS), 2017.*

Based on the reliability and validity tests, CR should be > 0.7 and AVE should be > 0.5 (Gaskin, 2011). All values of the CR are > 0.7, and the values of AVE are > 0.5. Therefore, the model satisfies both the reliability and validity conditions. Furthermore, this test suggested retaining four groups of factors: high performance work system (HPWS), employees' attitudes, employees' performance and institutional context.

5.3.7 Structural Equation Model (SEM)

To examine the theoretical interdependence between four factors (Recruitment and Selection, Performance Appraisal, Compensation system and Communication and information sharing) structural equation modelling was used. This analysis allows to test all the relevant paths and measurements errors and feedbacks are included directly into the model.

Figure 6: The SEM generated by AMOS



Source: High Performance Work System (HPWS), 2017.

The study conducted a structural equation model (SEM) see figure 7 with the help of AMOS version 21. SEM represents the relationship between the dependent (unobserved) variable and independent (observed) variables using path diagrams.

Therefore, the SEM facilitates to specify the manner by which specific latent variables directly and indirectly affect changes in values of other latent constructs in the model (Byrne, 2010). Preacher et al. (2007) state SEM is the best technique for such analysis because it can test multiple mediation paths simultaneously.

5.3.8 Mediation test

Mediation analysis can be defined as a statistical method used to examine and to test the hypotheses about how one variable (HPWS) transmit its effect on a consequent variable (Employee performance). To put it simply, what is the underlying mechanism, be it cognitive, behavioural or in the present study, by which HPWS influences employee performance.

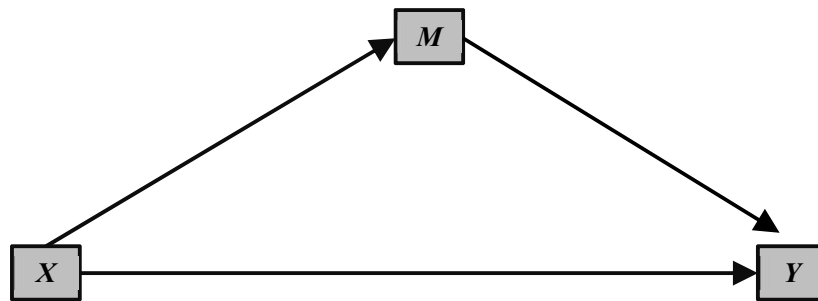


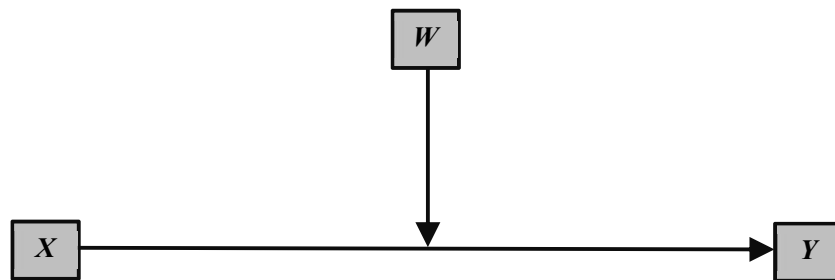
Figure 7: A simple mediation model depicted as a conceptual diagram.

The simple mediation model is represented in the diagram form in Figure-7. As it can be seen that the diagram shows two consequent variables (M) and (Y) and two antecedent variables (X) and (M), with X influencing Y and M, and M influencing Y. Therefore, it can be said that a mediation model is a causal system in which at least one causal antecedent X variable is proposed as influencing an outcome Y through an intervening variable M. Thus, M is called mediator variable also sometimes labelled as intermediary variable, surrogate variable and so forth (Hayes, 2018). For example, in the present study, the relationship between HPWS and employees' performance is mediated by employees' attitudes. For example, it can be seen in the conceptual model (Figure-9) that HPWS is proposed as influencing outcome of employee performance through an intervening variable of employee attitude. The results of the Sobel mediation test are significant (p-value 0). In other words, the indirect effect of HPWS on employees' performance is significantly mediated via employees' attitudes (mediator) (Preacher et al., 2001). Thus, the study supports Hypothesis (H₃).

5.3.9 Moderating test

A moderation effect is causal model that assumes ‘when’ or ‘for whom’ an independent variable most strongly or weakly causes a dependent variable (Frazier et al; 2004; Kraemer et al., 2002). A moderator is a variable that specifies conditions under which a given predictor is related to an outcome. The moderator explains ‘when’ a dependent variables (IV) and independent variables (DV) are related. Moderation implied an interaction effect, where introducing a moderating variable changes the direction or magnitude of the relationship between two variables. A moderation effect could be (a) Enhancing, where increasing the moderator would increase the effect of the predictor (IV) on the outcome (DV); (b) Buffering, where increasing the moderator would decrease the effect of the predictor on the outcome; or (c) Antagonistic, where increasing the moderator would reverse the effect of the predictor on the outcome (Frazier et al; 2004). In our study, institutional context said to be moderator of HPWS and employee performance or that institutional context and HPWS interact in their influence on employee performance.

Figure 8: A simple moderation model depicted as a conceptual diagram.



Moderation is shown in the form of a diagram in figure-8. The diagram represents a process in which the effect of some variable of interest X on Y is dependent or influenced on W, as shown in figure 8 arrow pointing from W to the line from X to Y. However, in structural equation

modelling test, such as AMOS in the present study did not draw the moderation model by constructing similar diagram in the analysis (see test of mod effect). Unlike mediation model, the moderation model is different in the form reflected in the actual statistical analysis (Hayes, 2018).

However, to test the moderating effect (H_2), the study conducted the test of moderating analysis, which shows the interaction of institutional context of HPWS and employees' performance (Figure 9). To be able to identify a moderating variable and its effect helps the researcher to establish the boundary conditions of that effect or present versus absent, positive versus negative and so forth (Hayes, 2018). Moderation effect can be seen in the conceptual model (Figure-8) and as it can be noted from (Figure-9) that Institutional variables weakens the relationship between HPWS and employee performance. So, the findings suggest that, institutional context negatively moderates the relationship between HPWS and employees' performance (unstandardized regression coefficients of independent variable 0.657, moderator 0.050 and interaction -0.064 with an intercept value 3).

Table 5.13: The model fit summary (SEM)

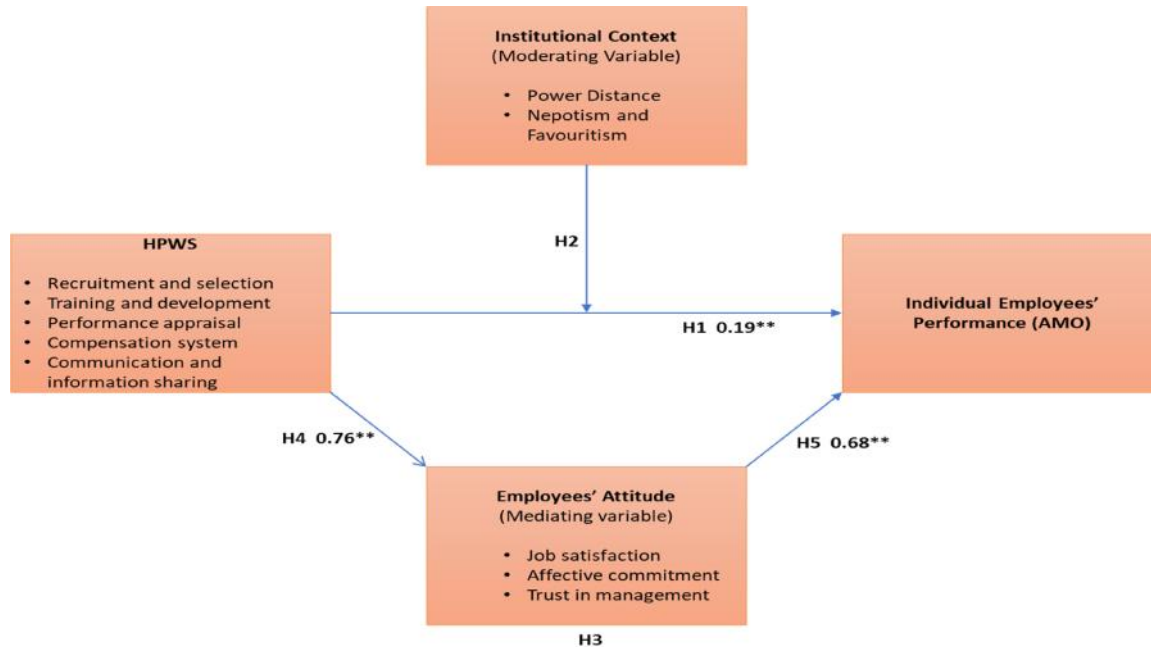
Fit Statistics	Acceptable threshold levels	Obtained
X^2	Low X^2 relative to df	300.481
Df		80
P	0.00 accepted for large sample size	.000
X^2/df	Between 2 to 5	3.756
CFI	>0.95	.925
RMR	< 0.08	.069

Source: High Performance Work System (HPWS), 2017.

Table 5.13 indicates that this study obtains $X^2 = 300.481$ (should be low X^2 relative to df), $df = 80$, $p = .000$ (0.00 accepted for large sample size), $X^2/df = 3.756$ (should be between 2 and 5), $CFI = .925$ (should be >0.95) and $RMR = .069$ (should be < 0.08), suggesting an adequate model fit (Arbuckle, (2013); Magistris and Gracia (2008); Gaskin, (2011). Since the

indices of the study's model fall within the acceptable threshold levels, the proposed model has good fit.

Figure 9: The model is drawn from the structural equation model derived using AMOS version 21.



Source: High Performance Work System (HPWS), 2017.

According to SEM (see Figure 7), at $p < 0.05$ significance level, three paths are found significant and thus support three hypotheses: H₁: HPWS practices directly and positively impact employees' performance ($\beta = 0.19^{**}$), H₄: HPWS positively predicts employees' attitudes ($\beta = 0.76^{**}$) and H₅: Employees' attitudes positively predict employees' performance ($\beta = 0.68^{**}$). To test the mediating effect (H₃), this study used Sobel test, the results of which are shown in Table 5.14.

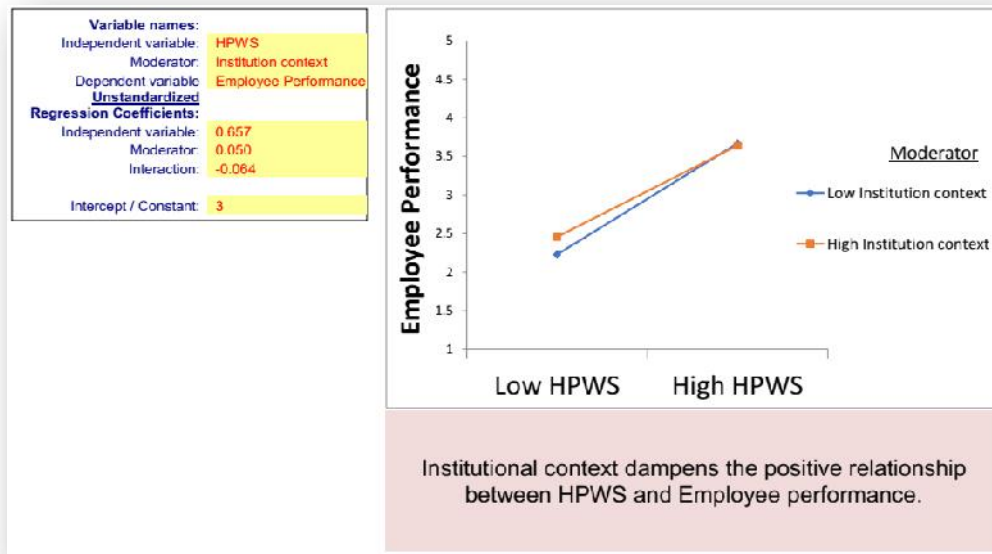
Table 5.14: Sobel Mediation Test (H₃)

Input:		Test statistic:	Std. Error:	p-value:
a	.790	Sobel test:	13.11191835	0.04404314
b	.731	Aroian test:	13.10296998	0.04407321
s _a	.037	Goodman test:	13.12088507	0.04401304
s _b	.044	Reset all	Calculate	

Source: High Performance Work System (HPWS), 2017.

The results of the Sobel mediation test are significant (p-value 0). In other words, the indirect effect of HPWS (IV) on employees' performance (DV) is significantly mediated via employees' attitudes (mediator) (Preacher et al., 2001). Thus, the study supports H₃: The relationship between HPWS and employees' performance is mediated by employees' attitudes. Mediation analysis can be defined as a statistical method used to examine and to test the hypotheses about how one variable (HPWS) transmit its effect on a consequent variable (Employee performance). To put it simply, what is the underlying mechanism, be it cognitive, behavioural or in the present study, by which HPWS influences employee performance. As it can be seen in the conceptual model (Figure-8) that HPWS is proposed as influencing outcome of employee performance through an intervening variable of employee attitude (Hayes, 2018).

Figure 10: Test of moderating effect (H₂)



Source: *High Performance Work System (HPWS), 2017.*

To test the moderating effect (H₂), the study conducted the test of moderating effect, which shows the interaction of institutional context of HPWS and employees' performance (Figure 9). A moderation effect is causal model that assumes 'when' or 'for whom' an independent variable most strongly or weakly causes a dependent variable (Frazier et al; 2004; Kraemer et al., 2002). In our study, institutional context said to be moderator of HPWS and employee performance or that institutional context and HPWS interact in their influence on employee performance. To be able to identify a moderating variable and its effect helps the researcher to establish the boundary conditions of that effect or present versus absent, positive versus negative and so forth (Hayes, 2018). Moderation effect can be seen in the conceptual model (figure-8) and as it can be noted from (figure-9) that Institutional variables weakens the relationship between HPWS and employee performance. So, the findings suggest that, institutional context negatively moderates the relationship between HPWS and employees'

performance (unstandardized regression coefficients of independent variable 0.657, moderator 0.050 and interaction -0.064 with an intercept value 3).

5.4 Discussion

The results of the study indicate that HPWS positively affect employees' performance of three leading telecom multinationals in Bangladesh. In particular, these relationships are mediated through employees' attitudinal aspects, i.e., job satisfaction, affective commitment and trust in management, by shedding light on the processes through which HR practices affect employees' performance. In addition, the research demonstrates how a country's institutional distance moderates the relationship between HPWS and employees' performance.

This study finds that HPWS directly and positively impact employees' performance (H1). This finding confirms the previous research findings (Fu et al; 2015; Obeidat et al; 2016; Hefferman and Dundan, 2016) and extends the previous research on AMO model by testing the role of the HPWS-performance link, providing further evidence that strengthens the AMO theory of strategic HRM field. Table 5.15 reflects all the hypotheses tested in our present study and were supported.

Table 5.15: Results of hypotheses testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	Result
H ₁	HPWS practices directly and positively impact employees' performance.	Supported
H ₂	Institutional context moderates the relationship between HPWS and employees' performance.	Supported
H ₃	The relationship between HPWS practices and employees' performance is mediated by employees' attitudes.	Supported
H ₄	HPWS practices positively predicts employees' attitudes.	Supported
H ₅	Employees' attitudes positively predict employees' performance.	Supported

In Bangladesh, MNCs', and more particularly telecom organisations', recruitment processes identify well-qualified candidates. MNCs' selection criteria emphasise foreign language proficiency, particularly English language fluency, which is beyond the reach of those applicants from middle class families who attended general public school. Several employment tests are conducted prior to hiring, including psychological tests from western cultures. Therefore, an employee's education level might play an important role in enhanced performance, especially for those graduates from selective private business schools who usually come from rich and highly educated families as well as those who returned from overseas with educational credentials from English-speaking countries. These employees are more open to a participative management style, which aligns with an HPWS philosophy rather than the Bangladeshi traditional administrative mind-set.

Unlike local private organisations, telecom organisations' compensation and benefits are important factors for employees' motivation to perform well. Generally, these compensation packages offer above market pay, and they also implement performance-related pay for employees. In addition, employee receives incentives such as housing allowances, child education allowances and day-care facilities, festival bonuses, profit sharing, and transport facilities, which all encourage employees to perform better. An interesting result of this study is that regardless of multinational subsidiaries' location and in contrast to the previous assumption that HPWS is a western managerial practice, HPWS consistently impact employees' performance in a non-western context. These findings may mean that these phenomena are universal regardless of national boundaries and different institutional environments.

However, to test the moderating effects of institutional context (measured by power distance, nepotism and favouritism) on the relationship between HPWS and employees' performance, our study confirms that institutional contexts negatively moderate the link

between HPWS and employees' performance (H2). This result confirms the findings of research conducted by Gaur et al; (2007), Triguero-Sanchez et al. (2013), and Hauff, et al; (2014).

The findings were expected in the context of Bangladesh since most organisations do not have any defined organisational structure. Communicating from bottom to top is rare in Bangladeshi organisations. Communications between superior and subordinates are mainly work-related. Therefore, the relationship among subordinates and superiors is reserved rather than friendly. It has become a cultural norm that top managers are not comfortable sharing important information with their subordinates because they think that with more information, employees can become more powerful and the managers may lose control of them. It is important to note that according to Hofstede (2016) PDI (power distance index), Bangladesh scores the highest (score of 80) in the world which means that people agrees to hierarchical stratification in which everybody has a place and which needs no further justification (Hofstede, 2016).

These facts suggest that securing a job in MNCs, especially in the high-tech sector in Bangladesh, is highly competitive because it requires highly skilled employees. In addition, high unemployment rate with severe competition for limited job offer put pressure on managers to engage in unfair practices. Even though preferential treatment and power distance are visible in HR practices in the organisation and negatively impact employees' performance, employees are most likely not to leave the organisation since they are aware that getting another job is not going to be easy. However, it may adversely effect on their job performance which is not desirable for the organisation.

In addition, countries like Bangladesh emphasize cultural values, emotions and family ties. Thus, employees develop emotional attachment to their work place, among colleagues and build a strong relationship. This emotional bonding motivates employees to perform well in

the job and commit to their organisations. It is possible that when employees experience hierarchical stratification, favouritism and nepotism, it reduces their motivation towards work and performance. Therefore, HR managers in MNCs need to narrow the power distance and improve communication practices to build friendly relationships to bring out employees' talents and increase performance. Organisations should provide training to HR managers to develop communication with respect and involve employees in important decision-making processes. As a result, employees can realise their full potential and become happy contributors to their organisations. Managers who are able to communicate with their subordinates without being authoritative can reduce the status differentiation in the relationship and create comfortable environments in which employees can better utilise their skills and abilities to perform well.

A previous study highlighted that local political pressure, nepotism and preferential treatment are heavily influenced in multinational organisations' HRM practices in Bangladesh (Choudhury and Mahmood, 2012). Our findings are consistent with this study. It appears that MNCs' top-level executives are engaged in preferential treatment to fulfil their own personal interests while recruiting or promoting employees in the organisation. For example, they often hire employees who have good connections with influential political parties or government officials. As a consequence, good candidates are deprived of jobs even if they are more qualified than those who get hired through the back door. Thus, unfair treatment always plays a moderating effect to those who seek jobs or who work in such organisations. These organisations may become more authoritarian and bureaucratic, which is contradictory to typical HPWS organisations. However, questions remain about to what degree all these practices make MNCs stronger and ensure their long-term sustainability if they do not take proper steps to prevent these unfair practices.

The results of the study provide strong support for the mediating effect of HPWS on employees' performance via employees' attitude. (H3). These findings are consistent with

previous research that positively linked employees' attitudinal variables to enhanced employee performance (Messersmith et al., 2011, Mansour et al; 2013, Ananthram et al, 2018).

Demirbag et al. (2014) found that performance-based pay and compensation play a major role in enhancing performance in HPWS organisations in Turkey. Martin-Garcia and Tomas (2016) further state that the most common motivation-enhancing practices are related to performance-based pay in Spain. Contrary to that, Muduli, (2012) found that performance-based pay is not suitable for Indian organisations because of their high collectivist culture. This finding is contradictory to our findings since our study was conducted in south Asia. Therefore, we assume the findings of our study will be similar to other studies in the same region. Perhaps, despite Bangladesh being part of south Asia, the country has its own characteristics and differs in many ways from other south-Asian economies. In addition, the context of the industry might have impacted the result of the study. In Bangladesh, the telecom sector has secured most priority for foreign investment and is a source of government revenues. What is more, IT and telecommunication sectors are pioneers in introducing structured performance appraisal systems (Mahmood and Absar, 2015) in the country. Therefore, HPWS allow tighter links between employees' performance-based pay and compensation in the studied organisations, which are most likely to result in a more satisfied workforce with increased performance outcomes. In addition, consistent with the AMO theory, satisfied employees are more motivated to engage in discretionary behaviour that also promotes enhanced performance. When individual employees are skilled, motivated and knowledgeable and are provided opportunities by their organisation via the strength of HPWS, employees are more likely to have higher job satisfaction, trust in their management and stay committed to the organisation for a longer period of time, which in turn positively relates to their performance.

It is important to take into consideration that how employees feel about the HPWS practices used in their organisation. This is more important factor than HPWS practices

themselves. Because employees' observation of HPWS are much more important because it directly affect employees' attitudes and positive attitudes enhance employees' performance. Our study confirms hypotheses H4 and H5 and the findings of Messersmith et al. (2011), Wang and Xu (2017), and Dasgupta and Singh (2014), and Ananthram et al., (2018).

Messersmith et al. (2011) assert that the higher the job satisfaction, the more likely it is that employees will have positive attitudes towards their jobs and be more committed to their organisations. Our findings suggest that employees show they are satisfied with their jobs and committed to the studied MNCs by performing well when they feel that their organisations are taking care of them by providing unbiased performance appraisals, performance bonuses and incentives along with above-market compensation packages. This study also points out that managers can improve the performance of employees by providing them continuous performance feedback, opportunities to share information and suggestions for improving their knowledge and skills. As a result, employees have necessary skills to perform their tasks and they feel well suited in their jobs, which positively influences their performance.

The findings assert that the studied organisations have well planned HPWS in place that reflect employees' perceptions of fairness. Although hierarchical stratification is dominant in Bangladeshi culture, the MNCs can reduce it with proper training and guidance to their managers. The study will help these organisations and decision-makers improve HR policies and practices to enhance employees' perceptions of the management, which in turn will enhance their performance. The study suggests that the success of organisations depends on their employees. Therefore, organisations should pay more attention to employees' attitudes via appropriate HPWS practices so they can contribute to their organisational success.

This chapter presented the quantitative result and analysis of the data. The result from questionnaire survey has been analysed by using AMOS version 21. The chapter describes the contents of the survey questionnaire and measures of the variables used in the study. The chapter also ends with the analysis of the findings and discussion.

The findings assert that the studied organisations have well planned HPWS in place that reflect employees' perceptions of fairness. The results of the study indicate that HPWS positively affect employees' performance of three leading telecom multinationals in Bangladesh in a non-western context. These findings may mean that these phenomena are universal regardless of national boundaries and different institutional environments. In addition, the study provides strong support for the mediating effect of HPWS on employees' performance via employees' attitudinal variables i.e.; job satisfaction, affective commitment and trust in management. However, the result indicated that the power distance, nepotism and favouritism negatively moderate the relationship between HPWS and employee performance in the organisation. Which reflects that these organisations are prone to authoritarian and bureaucratic in nature of their managerial practices which is contradictory to typical HPWS organisations.

Overall the quantitative findings reflect that the success of organisations depends on their employees. Therefore, organisations should pay more attention to employees' attitudes via appropriate HPWS so they can contribute to their organisational success. The quantitative result of the study facilitates the researcher to develop the interview questions for the managers to validate the qualitative phase of the study. Therefore, the next chapter presents the interview questions for the key informants used in the qualitative phase and discusses the interesting findings of the study.

Chapter 6

Qualitative Research Findings and Discussions

Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to present qualitative findings of the research by interviewing key informants of three studied organisations. The quantitative result facilitates the development of qualitative questionnaire and analysis of data. These results which had been garnered from 320 survey respondents, clearly showed that there are interrelationships between HPWS and employee performance as mediated by said employees' attitudinal variables. While the results also demonstrated that the cultural context may not have an effect on HPWS as a western practice, the institutional context appeared to have an overriding impact on the efficacy of HPWS. Based on the HR manager's perception and opinions, the research identifies why and how HPWS positively predicts employee performance in the research context. In addition, the chapter discusses the influence of institutional context in relation to the HPWS and employee performance in the three studied organisation. The interview questions and findings are presented followed by interpretations and discussions.

6.1 Key informant profile in the qualitative phase

The researcher interviewed senior HR managers from Human resources division (HRD) of three-selected telecom organisations. (see Table 6.1). The purpose for selecting HR managers as key informant is three-facets. First of all, it can be assumed that the HR managers can have an in-depth speculation of the workplace and its culture. Secondly, the HR managers are directly involved in how HR practices are implemented in the organisations. There were three HR managers who spoke on behalf of their respective organisation and their employees. But the insights of their remarks are not limited to their own judgement and cannot be seen as being biased as the researcher has made sure to develop her interview questions in such a way that

the interviewees could not evade her queries and had to reveal the true scenario. In order to ensure the validity of quantitative findings, the researcher tried to validate the employee level findings by interviewing the HR managers. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted in order to comprehend and analyse the responses of the HR managers. Interview questions were based upon the quantitative findings to validate the phase. (see Appendix-II).

Table 6.1: Interview participant for Qualitative phase

Position in the Organisation	Human Resource Department (Senior HR manager)
Role in the Organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Responsible for organisations HRM strategy, designing and implementing in accordance with the parent company guidelines. ▪ The HR managers are responsible for all the necessary support required for proper implementation of HR practices, policies and operational procedures. ▪ Make sure of proper execution of HR practices working with the frontline HR managers to ensure the satisfaction of the employee beneficiaries.
Number of Interview participants	Total number of nine (9) participants from three-studied organisation.

The result of the interviews reflects that HR managers perceive that the effective use of HPWS practices leads to enhanced employee performance in the studied organisation. The interview questions were divided under four major key themes derived from the literature review and the conceptual model of the study. For example, high performance work systems (HPWS), employee performance, employee attitudes and institutional context. The qualitative analysis was based on thematic analysis which is described in the following sections along with findings and discussions:

6.2 Thematic analysis

As implied in the methodology, appropriate thematic analysis is executed to derive the most accurate findings from a qualitative study, from which sound conclusions can be drawn. Thematic analysis is the process of identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data. It is often describing the research data in detail. A theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set. The goal of the thematic analysis is to identify themes, such as patterns in data that is important to capture and use those themes to address in the research to explain. This phenomenon is more than summarizing the data. Thematic analysis targets to interpret the data to make sense of it. Therefore, it typically reflects the fact that the data have been organised and summarized based on themes and subthemes (Macguire and Delahunt, 2017).

In the present research, the quantitative findings from the employees' level data (quantitative phase) provided a pre-determined theme to carry out further research in the (qualitative phase of the study). The quantitative phase provided the platform for the qualitative questions for the semi-structured interview. Therefore, in the qualitative phase, the researcher seeks to find out how HR managers perceive HPWS in relation to employee performance which also influences employee attitudes in a Bangladeshi multinational organisations. The semi-structured interviews were focused mainly pre-determined themes from the quantitative research data. This emphasized the point that 4 pre-determined themes namely HPWS, Employee Performance, Employee Attitude and Institutional context were used in the interview as prompts to elicit further information. The data from the semi-structured interviews were individually analysed and 11 patterns that emerged namely recruitment and selection, training and development, compensation, performance appraisal, communication and information sharing practices, job satisfaction, affective commitment and trust in management, power

distance, nepotism and favouritism were also analysed under the appropriate pre-determined themes.

According to Percy et al; (2017) semi structured interview questions can be pre-determined based on prior knowledge of the researcher (being a part of the same cultural background). Therefore, the present research used the pre-determined semi-structured interview questions to confirm the quantitative findings of the study to reach a unified conclusion (see appendix-IV). It is noteworthy to mention that some of the cultural nuances that the researcher met, included non-verbals and paralanguage such as respondents' silence, reticent body language, partial responses and specific requests not to be recorded during certain parts of the questioning. This potentially summarised information that the senior managers chose to reveal or focus on. In a worst case scenario, this means that these respondents could have been economical with the truth/were hiding something; or at best they appropriated the responses in a way that mostly served self/in-groups (or the status quo of the company). For example, there is significant power distance in an Asian cultural context of work environments (Hofstede, 2016), which appears to impact the delivery or not of HPWS, and how secure the managers feel in doing so. Also, Bangladesh though considered to be collectivist, may deviate from this collectivist culture expected in south Asian contexts; therefore, senior managers may be less likely to have extended discussions about the dichotomy of the same. So these respondents' stance may be directly or indirectly supported by the predominant values of authority and hierarchy, versus lower level employee job security and social cohesion as implied above, and implicated in other areas of discussion.

The analysis was done manually by the researcher based on the questions from the interview schedule using separate Microsoft Word files in tabular form to exercise better control over the data. This style of response is familiar to the researcher due to part of being from the same cultural background and context. Therefore, manual coding was much easier

and allowed better control over data. Manually treating the qualitative data confirmed that the data analysis addressed the research questions, and tried to explore the quantitative findings of the study to reach a unified conclusion. Auld et al. (2007) stated that doing the analysis by hand may allow for a better contextual understanding of the concepts or patterns that emerge from the data analysis. The following 6.3 section is devoted in discussion of main four themes of the qualitative phase namely high performance work system (HPWS), employee attitude, institutional context and employee performance.

6.3 Key Findings

6.3.1 (MainTheme 1) High performance work system (HPWS)

Question-1: Describe how do you perceive HPWS in your organisation?

The main goal of this question is to examine managerial perception regarding HPWS in the three selected organisations. The responses from the HR managers emphasized the importance of the HRM strategy which is also consistent with our literature review of the study.

All the interviewed HR managers answered positively to the question establishing the importance of the HPWS in the organisation.

HPWS has a deep influence on the organisational performance. The pressure from customers also plays an important part to adopt HPWS and to be different from other market players. [Respondent-5]

An organisation cannot sustain for a long time without adopting HPWS. HR department is the core of internal organisational strength to achieve higher employee performance. [Respondent-7]

HPWS are important for employee motivation to perform well. The future success of our organisation depends completely on its stock of intellectual capital. That's why our vision statement states we do not want to be number one in the telecom market but also employer of choice [Respondent-9]

Managers of the organisations were confident to express their views that their HR strategy is aligned with the organisational goal. One of the respondents opined that,

HPWS is an essential part of the organisation's backbone and responsible for employees' higher performance [Respondent 4]

During their interviews, the managers emphasised the fact that market competition among the three major mobile operators in the country is quite high therefore the organisation should have long run and short run strategies for developing their employees and to sustain in the market. For example; one of the managers stated,

Competition among mobile operators in the country is very high and we need to develop strategic plans to stay in the market [Respondent-1]

Our goal is to stay as high performing organisation and our HR division's involvement in strategic decision making is impartial. [Respondent-4]

Based on the above managerial responses it is apparent that High-performance work system managers were quite confident about the fact that their organisations had adopted these bundles of practices and perceived HPWS as the main indicator of the employee enhanced performance (Muduli et al., 2016; Ananthram et al., 2016). However, interview findings also revealed that being part of foreign subsidiaries, the studied organisations executed HPWS in place which is one of main motivation of employee enhanced performance.

I believe unlike local organisations in the country, HR policies and decisions are transparent in our organisation because of our multinational affiliations. We were automatically adjusted to a new system and we just love to be part of this organisation and so are our employees. Information is shared among employees in a participative decision-making style for a

better understanding of the policy and implementation. This also works as a motivation to stay committed to the organisation. [Respondent-6]

We are part of the biggest multinational telecom organisation in Europe and our organisation implemented HPWS to motivate employee to perform well. We have the largest HR department among other MNC's because we think people are the core of our business. We plan beforehand how to develop our employees to be innovative so that they enrich the process of work and coming up with new ideas to stay in the competition. [Respondent -2]

I have joined here after working twelve years in the local private organisation. While I was there, it was acceptable that most of the top management presume that all information including HR policies and decisions are not relevant for the departmental level of employees. HR policies are considered confidential in local organisations and are only shared among HR managers. HR practices are never an imposition to us or our employees'. It is one of our greatest motivation in the work place to have HPWS and it is implemented. This is one of the best things working in a multinational environment. We have open door policy in the organisation as you can see..... our office space is laid out in such a way that encourages communication among each other's. Decisions coming from the top are discussed immediately with relevant explanations. Any dissatisfaction of the employees regarding policies or decisions are cleared up right away. This is all because we strictly follow the HR policies rather than just for HR documentation. [Respondent-8]

In addition to the above findings, it was clear that most of the interviewed HR managers agreed the importance of HPWS which is an integral part of the organisation to build a sustainable competitive advantage. It is evident from the above responses that the contribution of HPWS practices in the studied organisation is positively linked to employee performance outcomes. Managers shed the light in above arguments during their interview. Following are some examples of statements:

We know that competitive advantage depends on employee's skills and abilities. Our organisation is based on hi-tech and skill-based industries, where employees' competitiveness, performance and productivity matters. Therefore, people oriented strategy is central part of our business policy.

[Respondent-1]

HPWS in our organisation promotes motivation for the employees who already know the business and take ownership of getting things done.

[Respondent-5]

Above responses by the HR managers clearly emphasized that HR department plays a key role in achieving organisational goal by involving employees. These findings are consistent with the SHRM school of thought. Empirical research suggests that in order to achieve competitive advantage, it is important to align HRM practices and policies with business strategy while having the HR function central to the organisation (Barney and Wright, 1998; Ding and Akhtar, 2001). In addition, the interview findings suggest that HR managers believed that the organisation values their employees because performance do not trigger from HPWS alone. Therefore, proper implementation of HPWS, in the organisation, employees are equipped with skills, abilities and motivation to perform well. These findings support the RBV view that employee will display higher level of discretionary behavior which will result in organisational

effectiveness and employees will become a source of organisations competitive advantage (Martin-Tapia et al; 2009; Fu et al; 2015; Ozcelik et al; 2016).

6.3.2 (Main Theme - 2) Employee performance

Question-2: Describe HPWS or HR practices? and its influence(s) on employee performance.

In the quantitative phase, the study tested a conceptual model where HPWS practices is directly and positively related to employee performance. Therefore, the second interview question is directed towards further explanation of HPWS as a bundle of HR practices to examine its influences on employee performance. Manager's perception and opinions on each individual HR practices are discussed in detail in following paragraphs, and identified sub-themes that set the foundation for an evaluation of the aforementioned conceptual model can be appropriately allocated to these corresponding paragraphs a) – e).

a) Recruitment and Selection

A sub-theme that derived from the interview was Recruitment and Selection. Literature review indicates that recruitment and selection may be positioned as one of the most noticeable components of the HPWS dimension that predict employee performance (Armstrong 2009; Bratton and Gold., 2012; Abdullah et al., 2011). Organisational success depends on choosing the right candidate for the right job. (Aycan, 2005; Boselie, 2010). Delaney and Huselid, 1996). Therefore, the responses from the interviews indicated that recruitment and selection are the most important factor that ensures whether they have chosen the right candidate for their organisational success especially in the MNC's. The respondents commented that,

We understand that our employees are responsible for the future of the organisation so we always welcome (recruit and select) candidates who stand out with their talent, intellect and morality. Of course, CVs and academic

qualifications are important to a certain extent but we also appreciate their passion for the job. [Respondent-1]

Our organisation recruits throughout the entire year and the selection procedures are quite vigorous to ensure employee performance. [Respondent-4]

The telecom scene has become a tough competition nowadays as the brilliant young graduates are now joining the organisation. We will fail to hold on to them without the proper selection procedures in place. That is why we have rigorous and careful selection processes of candidates. [Respondent-2]

The strength of our recruitment process is that we are focused on the candidates 'can do' attitude. So, when the recruitment panel feels that a candidate possesses the ability to push beyond his/her boundary and take up new challenges, we often ignore any minor shortcoming of skills of the candidate. We believe, candidates are with the right attitude can be trained later after employment. [Respondent-5]

We often notice during interview and selection process that candidates may not have the highest skills but have the right attitude.....such people tend to work harder to accomplish given tasks and do not give up easily. We think with proper training and guidance they can be improved because they have the right attitude to take up new challenges. These types of candidates add value to the organisation rather than people who are highly skilled but not willing to think out of the box. [Respondent-6]

Recruitment and selection procedures are held with great importance as they help the organisations to hire employees who are best suited for the organisation. This is the reason why

most of the HR managers emphasized the importance of recruitment and selection methods. The organisations recruit and select job seekers through their internal website as well as via employment agencies or through participation in job fairs in their respective Universities. In addition, the organisations maintain a database of previous applicants to cheque whether any of them qualify for the vacancy in hand. What is rather unique in their recruitment process is that they have an online assessment test for all applicants before short-listing the prospective candidates. This test helps to understand team spirit, customer centric behavior, positive attitude, interpersonal and communication skills, leadership qualities, an innovative mind and problem solving capacity to understand how dependable the candidates are to fit in the high performing organisation. One of the respondents stated that,

We have experienced rise in the telecom market performance, profit and lower employee turnover in the past 3 years due to our excellent team. This is due to our vigorous recruitment policy.... we choose the right candidate for our organisation and they are positively contributing in our organisational success. **[Respondent-8]**

In relation selection process, what seemed clear from the respondents was about the skills potential candidates had. During the interview one of the respondents mentioned about important criteria while selecting candidates that they need to have the English language skills and Computer literacy.

While shortlisting candidates, we prefer the ones with fluent in English language skills and strong IT skills along with good academic achievements. Selecting the right candidate reduces costs and time as well because this process involves longer time. **[Respondent-9]**

This was echoed by another respondents who stated that,

Our priority is to select candidates with the right skills and competences in order to raise the profile of our organisation. The people out there who have the ability, knowledge and experiences and who would fit quite well in our organisation. What we need is to attract them. [Respondent-9]

Although most of the interviewees stressed on the importance of academic achievements, knowledge test, the interview process in relation to recruitment and selection process, however, one respondent emphasized,

We give more priority to the candidates who are educated abroad or in locally come from prestigious private universities. Priority is also given to candidates who have foreign work experiences. Because we belong to multicultural environment and office culture needs people with good communication skills in English as well as quickly adoptable to the office culture. It's not we are discriminating who lack the skills but we do prefer to see language proficiency while we recruit. Also experience in foreign country is a plus point during our recruitment and selection process. [Respondent-7]

The interview findings also indicated that, all the organisations under study are more or less similar when it comes to their recruitment and selection programme due to the same nature of business and foreign affiliations. However, they also outsource their customer care line executives through different local head-hunting agencies. As such, they are not directly involved in recruitment process of customer care employees. Based on the managerial perception it is visible that recruitment and selection practices in all the organisations are one of the most important HR practices because the managers think selecting the right candidate for the job not only contribute towards organisational productivity but also help to gain greater employee performance. These findings also correspond with our literature review (Katou and Budhwar, 2007; Bos-Nehles et al; 2013; Schimansky, 2014).

b) Training and Development

Interview with the HR managers highlighted the fact that in order to maintain the competitive advantage, it is important to have highly skilled employees in the organisation. Managers also stated that a well-trained workforce requires better training and development opportunities to perform well. It is quite a challenge to retain highly skilled employees in the organisation because of competition among telecom organisations as well as new businesses coming up in the market and there are scarce of good employees in the country.

The interview findings suggested that more or less all the studied organisations training programmes involves in ongoing trainings programmes, comprehensive trainings for managers and other senior executives, and short day-long training programmes based on employees' job specific need or in relation to new product development. In addition, HR department arranges in-house and overseas training programmes conducted by local trainers as well as trainers from abroad. These training programmes include, leadership skills, team building, effective communication skills, and effective customer service. Moreover, the HR division conducts customized training on management style, project management and feedback and coaching for the senior HR managers. These findings are consistent with the literature review (Chris, 2011; Posthuma et al; 2013) who argue that training and development positively influences employee performance (Raja et al., 2011; Aryee et al., 2012; Gunu et al., 2013). This was noted by the interviewee/s when respondents 2, 4 and 5 stated that:

We are detail oriented when we design our training programmes.... we don't think that one size fits all strategy. Training is based on the individual need and aligned with our business strategy. We are also careful in terms of our training programmes quality while selecting development partner, further ensuring employee performance. [Respondent-2].

Training is very important for employees because it varies due to nature of each job responsibilities. It targets the job specific skills as well as aims to improve employees' overall development to go to the next level. **[Respondent-4].**

On the job training is very important in our organisation because newly recruit employees are monitored and measured first six months in their probationary period. We have certain parameters to evaluate the employee's performance and get feedback from the line manager before we confirm the employment contract.

[Respondent-5].

The literature review indicates that the training and development sector of an organisation is not considered to be just another HR practice. Rather it is an investment on behalf of the organisational body for the enhancement of their employees through which it is expected that various performance developments can be achieved (Bulut and Culha, 2010). Training is therefore an important HR function acting as the motivating factor that aligns the employees' personal goals with their professional target. Reducing the fine line between. what is personal and what is professional results unto a single determined objective for the employees which is easier to achieve and leads to a better performance (Karthik, 2012; Selden et al; 2013; Ramdani et al; 2014). Being conscious of the importance of it all, one of the HR managers explained that,

We can only ensure a sustainable competitive advantage of our organisation when all our employees are synchronised with necessary skills and knowledge.

Providing them with the right training is only a small investment compared to the profit they bring us **[Respondent-1]**

Responses from the interview indicated that training and development is based on a specific competency-framework namely three levels offered with the said organisations. The basic level is for the beginners which typically includes intermediate level soft skills such as computer

training, communication skills, business writing skills and so forth. Then the functional training mainly targets departmental job responsibilities, and finally leadership training is focused on line managers. The managers stated that:

The trainings we offer varies from junior employees to senior employees, as a junior employee may need help with basic job specific skills, communication or computing whereas a line manager's training focuses on leadership and how to assist his subordinates. **[Respondent-7]**

It has been reported by the line manager's feedback that after being provided with the training the employees were found to be better at report writing, their planning capability was better, their communication skills were enhanced which were reflected in their work performance. Also, they were more confident in their job. **[Respondent-9]**

We provide staff with opportunities to upskill staff and expand their capabilities with the organization. We believe that every employee can benefit from the inhouse training and this can lead to obtaining higher positions in the different department **[Respondent-3]**

The interview findings suggest that training and development initiative in the studied organisation have a two-fold effect on the development of employees. While the organisation provides training to their employees to perform effectively in their present job responsibilities, on the other hand, the employees are prepared for their futures roles and responsibilities. For example, one manager stated that,

Based on the need assessment, the right candidates are assigned to the right training so that complete utilization of the resources can be ensured.

[Respondent-1]

One of the interviewed organisation has launched an online based e-learning training system where the employees can choose and select the training courses and contents of each training programmes, schedule and availability. The system opens several doors for the employees with the convenience of learning from their home and a thorough enhancement of their skills. One manager stated,

Our employees have the liberty to choose their own training programmes as we are the first to introduce an e-learning training website. We understand the necessity of training programmes and so do our employees. So, whenever they face any difficulties, or become aware of any shortcomings, they can immediately schedule any available training course. And as there are no time and place constraints, employees are free to continue the course after work and from their home. [Respondent-8]

Although in the quantitative phase of the study, training and development practices were excluded from the analysis because of the low employee response rate. However, the interview findings confirmed that, training and development is one of the most important components of HPWS dimension in the studied organisations and it is positively related to employee performance. These findings are also consistent with our literature review (Aryee et al; 2012; Posthuma et al; 2013; Selden et al; 2013, Ramdani et al; 2014).

c) Performance Appraisal

Among all the HR practices, performance appraisal is said to make the largest contribution for the success of an organisation. Organisations under study indicates that performance appraisals inform employees about their job performance and of ways to improve it. The managers indicated the organisations performance largely depend on its individual employee performance and these opinions are consistent with our literature review. (Khan, 2010; Quresh et al., 2010; Abdullah, et al; 2011; Chang and Chen, 2002). The HR managers opined that

feedbacks from line managers, colleagues and peers are valued in terms of their opinions and feedback. The concerned organisation uses different format of the performance appraisal format such as 360 degree, KPI (key performance indicator), and other from their own parent company prescribed format. In support of above summery of discussion, following are some managerial opinions gathered from the interview responses:

Performance appraisal is very important for our employees and it is not another piece of documentation but it is carried out based on our parent company prescribed format. [Respondent-3]

Performance appraisals are conducted biannually and employees are expected to meet up certain standards to perform in job. [Respondent-5]

Feedback from immediate managers and colleagues are another important parameter to measure employee performance. [Respondent-4]

Performance appraisal is an important indicator to measure how the employees are doing in terms of their job and it should be communicated to the employees as well to motivate or how to improve on their present performance. [Respondent-6]

Sometimes it is difficult to provide feedback to the employees who are underperformers. Although we provide training and guidance to improve on their skills so that employees can improve on their performance. [Respondent-1]

We consider performance appraisal very seriously because this way we can identify talented employees in our organisation and we develop them to grow within our organisation. [Respondent-7]

Interview findings also suggested that conducting performance appraisal can identify employee's strength and weakness (Reference from LR). Employees feel valued by the management and therefore work more effectively for their organisational success. The following statements are an illustration in this regard:

Performance appraisal is target to bring out employees' strength and weakness but not to control them. [Respondent-9]

We recognize employees who are outstanding in their performance and create opportunities for further career development.....who has the potential for the management capacity or ability to take up to the job in the next level will be always given priority by planning for training to get enough knowledge and skills for important role in the organisation.

[Respondent-8]

Performance appraisal is made over three aspects. Employees are assessed by their supervisors, HR managers and by self-evaluation to determine their team work, work attitude and the scope for further improvements.

[Respondent-2]

d) Compensation

Telecom organisations require their employees' skills, efficiency and motivation through their specialized, scientific and technical knowledge and such objectives can be attained through one of the vital tools of the HR such as compensation. The organisations compensation ensures that every employee is satisfied and their motivation is retained. It was evident from the managerial interview that compensation system in the studied organisation is one of the most important HR practices in order to ensure motivation for employees as reflected in (Giorgio and Arman, 2008; Danish and Usman, 2010; Khan, 2010; Qureshi et al., 2010; Katou and Budhwar, 2006; Chang and Chen, 2002). The interviewed managers stated that:

I think compensation policy is the most important to attract good candidates.

The turnover rate is very high in our sector and compensation and reward play a big role whether employees will stay or switch jobs. [Respondent-3]

In our organisation the compensation packages are related to the employee's performance appraisal. [Respondent-2]

In the studied organisations, benefits are divided in different components such as cash benefits (i.e. basic salary, house rent, and medical allowances), non-cash benefits (i.e. health insurance, employee transportation), internal and external equity, performance based pay etc. In addition, the organisations compensation policies were very much similar to each other. While explaining the components of benefits and reward policies of their organisations, some of the following responses were captured and quoted below:

We have profit sharing scheme which is shared among permanent fulltime employees. Once every year, 20% of the company's total share of profit is distributed among the senior employees. Rest of the profit is distributed among employees based on their ranking and employee performance appraisal in that period. [Respondent-4].

It is known to everybody that we pay the above market salary to our employees and everybody wants to work with our organisation because of the handsome compensation and benefits [Respondent-6].

We have introduced children's daycare to our employees' and we are the only multinational introduced such facilities. Lot of other companies are trying to establish these facilities for their employees' to motivate, especially women member of staff [Respondent-5].

Management provides incentives to hard working employees at the end of each month, usually recognizing as the 'employee of the month' award to stay motivated and to take up new challenges [Respondent-1].

From the above managerial responses, it is evident that compensation and reward system in the studied organisations are competitive and connected with the organisations ability to attract, motivate and retain their employees in the organisations which findings are also consistent with the literature review of the study (Khan, 2010., Katou and Budhwar, 2006; Demirbag et al., 2014)

e) Communication and information sharing

Consistent with the literature review, the interview with the manager confirmed the fact that transparent communication among colleagues and sharing information between subordinates and superiors in the organisation are the significant HR practice that promotes organisational openness in both individual and organisational level (Abdullah et al; 2011, Selden et al; 2013). The managers also opined that employee trust and loyalty can be achieved through free flow of information sharing among colleagues. Apart from professional communication only, the researcher has observed that HR managers often build personal relationships with their member of staffs and show concern for their wellbeing. Communication as such has been seen to increase the loyalty among employees as they feel secured under their employers and feel committed towards work. In support of above arguments, the researcher has noted following comments stated by the managers:

We try to be transparent and unbiased when we communicate with our colleagues and to ensure that we conduct survey (i.e; employee satisfaction survey) once a year to see our employees' satisfaction level. As for our working environment, we make sure that the atmosphere is relaxed because

most of us come to work at 9 am and go home at 9 pm. So....it is important to have a break in between. [Respondent-5]

Ours is the only organisation to the best of my knowledge that does not have any formal dress code. Our CEO sometimes comes to work with our national outfits. [Respondent-2]

We moved out recently from our old office building. The new management introduced an 'open office culture'. This means all employees in every department or unit co-operates by sitting alongside with each other in an open space. [Respondent-3]

In addition, previous study has indicated that a transparent communication practice between manager and employee is important to keep employees satisfied and happy and to motivate them towards superior performance. (Dasgupta and Singh, 2014). Such office culture reflects no visible hierarchical distance among employees, which motivates employees to better communicate with each other by creating opportunities. The interview findings also suggested that employee knowledge sharing programme plays an integral role in better dissemination of information resulting unto the best practices among employees. In support of this another respondent stated that,

The management has introduced an online chat room and a blog culture where employees can raise issues and express their concerns while keeping their identities anonymous. Introduction of such a concept in the sector of information sharing practices in top-notch organisations is a first in Bangladesh. [Respondent-1]

This initiative indicates that management responses to the employee concerns are valued by the top management which is one of the integral of HPWS dimension (Selden et al; 2013; Evans and Davis, 2005; Fu, 2013). Following are some examples of managerial responses:

Line managers have weekly departmental meeting with their own team members where they have enough opportunities to say their views. We make sure everyone can express their opinions, suggestions and grievances at the meeting apart from their work plan. Minutes of the meeting then circulated via email so that management are also aware of what is going around.

(Respondent-7)

For fun, we organise events such as music festivals or sports tournaments. We celebrate our birthdays together and organise get together in our traditional holidays like language day, Independence Day and religious festivals. Our diverse cultural team really enjoys the activity, food and socializing which keeps the employees' motivated to stay in the organisation and perform well. **[Respondent-6]**

The discussion with the managers and researcher observation clearly suggests that clarity in the communication process between the top management and employees is regarded with importance to achieve organisational success. From the above findings the researcher observes the dominance and influence of western style HPWS practices in all the studied MNCs coming to an overall conclusion that the HR strength in these organisations are relatively strong in accordance to our theoretical standpoint (Messersmith et al; 2011; Wang et al; 2011; Fu et al., 2015).

6.3.3 (Main Theme - 3) Employee Attitudes

Question-3: Describe how HPWS may influence employee attitudes.

The interview question intends to find out how HPWS may influence employee attitude. The above interview question and interviewees' responses led to further categorisation of the different areas of focus that is job satisfaction, affective commitment and trust in management

aim to address the specifics of employee attitudes which in turn positively influences employee performance

It is worthwhile to mention that during the development of the survey instrument for the employee level data collection, the researcher had consulted with the HR managers regarding the appropriateness of the survey questionnaire. The HR managers were, therefore, well informed about the nature of the questions and in particular the employee attitudinal variables such as job satisfaction, affective commitment and trust in management which also facilitates researcher to further investigate from the managerial perception. Therefore, managerial responses are segmented according to the different attitudinal variables. It appears from the interview with the HR managers that there is an agreement among all the interviewees on the positive link between HPWS and employee attitude existing in their respective organisations which positively influences employee performance. The findings and interpretations from the interview from each attitudinal variable are discussed below:

a) Job Satisfaction

Literature review indicates that employees' skills do not directly provide value to the organisation unless they are reflected through their positive attitudes (Wright et al., 1994). These findings support the logic that HPWS in the organisation can enhance job satisfaction to a greater extent. Interview with the HR managers revealed that the job satisfaction survey in the organisation facilitates employees to voice their concerns, share information among each other and allows employees to identify and select a balance of reasonable policies for the common good of both the employees and the organisation. In addition, training opportunities for job specific skills, unbiased performance appraisal, employee reward based on employee performance appraisal all were positively associated with employee job satisfaction. Some of the managerial responses are stated below:

Our organisation conducts job satisfaction survey annually to ensure that the employees are happy with their job and to find out ways to improve the working condition. **[Respondent-5]**

The compensation is based on performance appraisal and that is the reason employees are motivated to perform well in the job. **[Respondent-2]**

The more you perform the more you get - we take pride in the fact that no other telecom company in the country has performance schemes as ours. **[Respondent-8]**

Employees have the liberty to select their own training programme to meet their own need. **[Respondent-4]**

One of the biggest motivations and satisfaction to work here is our office environment. It is like a one big family to work here. **[Respondent-3]**

The interview findings also suggested that employees have the freedom to select and obtain training programmes of their own preference through a self-realization of their own potential and inadequacy. By selecting appropriate and need based training programmes, employees can target their work specific skills to perform better which positively predicts employee performance (Messersmith et al; 2011). In support of the argument following responses were captured:

Our organisation offers an e-learning website so that employees choose their training and development activities online and enhance their skills which facilitates to take more job responsibilities and ensure growth in the organisation. **[Respondent-6]**

We recognize and appreciate employees' achievement so that they feel management are taking care of them. **[Respondent-7]**

b) Affective Commitment

During the interview with the HR managers several factors were mentioned which directly motivates employees to stay committed to the organisation they work for. Although it was came out in the discussion that turnover rate among organisations are quite high in the context of multinational organisations in the country. Despite the fact, several positive examples were captured from the managerial perception about affective commitment and employee performance. Following are some examples of responses:

We compensate our employees in accordance with other telecom organisations, so the compensation and benefit package are built upon a common base. This ensures that the system is competitive and retains employees committed to the organisation. **[Respondent-9]**

Our organisation provide soft loans to deserving candidates so that they can pursue higher studies. Also, there are numerous foreign training opportunities which motivates employees to perform well in the organisation. **[Respondent-1]**

We offer a competitive pay package and excellent career progression opportunities in our organisation to motivate employees to perform well and stay committed to us. **[Respondent-3]**

It appears that compensation and other benefits offered by the organisation as well as training programmes are the most important motivating factors for employees' long-term commitment in the organisation. It can be argued that an organisation's competitive pay policy and employee training opportunities enable employees to grow within the organisation and motivates them to stay in the organisation. These findings are consistent with the literature review discussed

previously that when organisation provides employees to grow in the organisation and support them to gather new knowledge and skills, the employees are more committed towards their organisation and also develop emotional attachment towards the organisation (Zaleska and de Menezes, 2007; Kehoe and Wright, 2013). Views of managerial responses are described below:

All employees of our organisation are like family members and it is evident in their work and interaction with everybody. In many cases, employees turn down job offers from other organisation even if they offer high salary package that what we provide at the present. **[Respondent-4]**

Through the introduction of our extended maternity leave and the in-house child care facilities we have seen a rapid declination of turnover rates among our women employees. **[Respondent-7]**

We have seen turnover rates decline as we facilitated our employees with medical and transport facilities, day-care services for their children and festival bonuses. These facilities motivate employees to come in everyday and they are hardly ever absent. **[Respondent-6]**

The managers also expressed that monetary benefit can motivate employee to a certain point. Rather, a subconscious satisfaction occurs when they are treated fairly in the work place and HR practices come hand in hand with this. In support of these opinion, managerial responses were captured in the following statements:

With time, the employees develop a sense of belonging within the organisation which is kind of emotional ownership that makes them feel responsible for their job responsibilities and they perform well. This commitment eventually motivates our employees to stay committed in the organisation. **[Respondent-9]**

Young employees' have the tendency of switching jobs too often so turnover rate is high among them. In contrast, we have lot of employees who have been with us for a long time and feel committed to this organisation. So, it is evident that there is higher job satisfaction and committed employees within our organisation. **[Respondent-8]**

Furthermore, the interview findings suggest that all the studied the organisations have similar performance-based reward scheme, which can be regarded as a motivational factor impacting employees' performance. The organisation offers various types of incentives i.e. training allowances, medical and transport facilities, festival bonus, children's in-house day-care services, festival bonuses, gym facilities and so forth to motivate the employees to perform better, which result in low-employee turnover, low absenteeism and enhanced employee performance and commitment.

c) Trust in Management:

It is not uncommon for Bangladeshis to seek knowledge from those that they consider their superiors, therefore, an equal distribution of knowledge develops the faith and eagerness to learn. The quantitative phase of the study also confirms these findings and the interview with the HR managers are also consistent with the result. As such, following statements are some examples of trust between managers and employees.

The relationship between employee and line managers are very friendly in the organisation.... so, trust among them are quite transparent. When managers are bit older than the team members, the employees' have more trust in them out of respect. **[Respondent-1]**

Performance bonus, promotion, training opportunities to the deserving candidates all leads to trust between managers and employees.

[Respondent-3]

Personal follow-up and feedback on performance, making frequent contact with employees, personalised remarks, all leads to strong connection between employees and managers. **[Respondent-5]**

Line managers treat their team members in a paternalistic approach and always share concerns for their wellbeing that is the base of trust among them. **[Respondent-4]**

An unbiased performance appraisal establishes trust between employee and HR managers. If line managers provide their own personal input in the performance appraisal then the PA mechanism is bound to fail. Our department make sure this does not happen and employees are satisfied with the appraisal system. Moreover, communication, feedback and follow-up between employees and their team leaders enhances trust among them which triggers employees to perform well. **[Respondent-8]**

Organisations sitting arrangement layout is planned in such a way that everybody can see each other and communicate freely which reflects no barriers building a strong bond between colleagues and managers. **[Respondent-6]**

Based on the managerial perception of trust, it is found that most of the HR managers believe that they have trust among employees and management in their respective organisation. The manager perceived that supportive environment in the organisation leads to higher level of employee performance which is also consistent with the literature review discussed (Innocenti, et al; 2011; Boxall and Purcell, 2011; Searle and Dietz 2012; Mihail and Klutsiniotis, 2018).

6.3.4 (Main -Theme 4) Institutional Context

Some discussions throughout this thesis, indicate that institutional context is perhaps the single most impactful decisive and moderating factor, with regards to HPWS. The dynamics of the

relationship between the employee and manager can be tenuous, especially with regards to the maintenance of the hierarchical status quo, indicative of the theme of what exactly is it that is the backbone of the status quo. From discussions, it is clear that such a theme may be narrowed down to sub-theme such as power distance, nepotism and favouritism.

Question-4: Discuss the influence of power distance, nepotism and favouritism between employee and manager.

The quantitative findings of the current study indicate that power distance and between employee and manager has a stronger effect on managerial practice in the studied organisations. This suggests that HR managers with a status distinction preference are most likely to negatively influence the HPWS practices and employee performance within the organisation (Chowdhury and Mahmood, 2012; Triguero-Sanchez et al. 2013). In addition, literature review indicated that nepotism and favouritism on HRM practices weakens the effective implementation of HPWS and negatively impact employee performance (Aycan, 2005; Arasli et al; 2006, Ozler and Buyukarslan, 2011; Safina, 2015; Nadeem et al; 2015). The following sections briefly summarises the major findings from the interview schedule.

However, when asked about such practices, the researcher observed that the HR managers responded with distinct hesitation. The most important reason behind a face-to-face interview became clear at this point as it became evident that the HR managers spoke more fluently with their eyes rather than their voices. HR managers were cautious and at the same time hesitant in addressing these issues and thus their responses were vague at the best. This left little opportunity for further discussion but the researcher kept on probing gently for further details. This visible difference between verbal and non-verbal expression lead the researcher to assume that the quantitative results regarding power distance and preferential treatment were in fact correct and that the HR managers were not as transparent as they claimed. Despite the

guaranteed confidentiality, the HR managers would not discuss negatively while being on record and so the researcher deemed their responses as being unreliable and invalid.

The managers were reluctant to admit that power distance, nepotism and favouritism could be a source of employee dissatisfaction which may negatively impact their job performance. However, few managers agreed that favouritism exists but for a good cause such as to retain potential employee in the organisation. In support of this view, the following comments were noted:

The organisation has strict policies in the sense that they do not allow any nepotism or favouritism to any prospective candidate they intend to recruit. **[Respondent-6]**

It is the organisational policy that any sort of interference during the recruitment process will be seriously dealt according to the company policy. **[Respondent-2]**

Performance bonus depends on their annual KPI (Key performance indicator). Power distance has nothing to do with that. **[Respondent-3]**

Labor laws are implemented and employees are given their due rights...but sometimes favouritism towards certain employee is visible to retain good employee in the organisation. **[Respondent-4]**

There will be always fine line between superiors and subordinates. It is obvious....and it has nothing to do with work performance...
[Respondent-5]

Employee promotion is based on performance appraisal only.
[Respondent-8]

However, one of the HR managers explained the rationale for recruiting managerial level candidate in the organisation through personal contacts. Although they have stated that HR

practices are fair and unbiased for all employees' but sometimes the recruitment for managerial position is based on informal connection and through other networks. One of the respondents stated that:

Looking through a CV is never enough while recruiting for specialized post.

The managerial position requires specific employee competences, qualifications and proven track records. So, it is common to rely on word of mouth and personal sources. We don't consider this to be any sort of preferential treatment as we are doing this for the benefit of our own organisation. In most cases the experts from parent company provide training to the managerial executives and we need to make sure that the candidates we select must have the capabilities to perform the job responsibilities. **[Respondent-7]**

The interview responses indicated that HR practices (in this case recruitment of managerial post) differs in case of management position in the organisation. The above discussion suggested that the extent to which the HR managers' perceptions of effectiveness of HPWS on employee performance could differ (Guest, 2011). Our survey relied solely on the employee level responses to examine the relationship between HPWS, employee attitude, institutional context and employee performance. This validates the previous study that the perception of HPWS can vary distinctly in individual employees. In addition, a previous research highlighted that the country or contextual factors also impacts how the individual employees may perceive HPWS and performance parameters (Al-Meer, 1995, Fey et al., 2000, El-Ghalayani, 2016). The low response rate by employees in the quantitative section, to questions about training and development that could potentially increase their performance cannot be ignored. This in one way can be presented as part of the mediating variable of employee attitude, and possibly reflects the degree of willingness to uptake said continued professional training. Accordingly

by fair assumption, it could widen the power distance gap, especially if senior managers perceive employees' dichotomous relationship with the collectivist culture and desire or lack thereof to do what they as managers deem necessary for high organisational performance. The summary of the findings from the interview and researchers own interpretations are discussed in the following paragraphs.

6.4 Discussion

According to the qualitative findings of the study, the researcher has come to terms with the pattern as a recurring theme that HPWS are of some degree of anxiety to the three leading telecom multinationals in Bangladesh and they occupy a rather important area of concern when it comes to the formal structures of the studied organisations. The interview findings also established that the HR department is considered very important for the organisations and that HPWS directly impact the employees' performance and promote employee positive attitude towards their organisation. One of the important theme here is that HPWS which is the pillars of the studied organisations can bring about a change in employees and overall performance of the organisation.

As it can be seen from the interview findings, all of the organisations have a sound recruitment and selection process that is based on employees' qualifications. Candidates also go through several screening procedures during the selection process to ensure that they have the necessary skills and knowledge to perform well. Previous studies suggested that an extensive selection procedure is related to higher job satisfaction because better-fit employees are most likely to do well in their jobs (Spector, 1997; Messersmith et al., 2011). Further, it can be argued that the education systems in Bangladesh are heavily influenced by western business curricula. That is so, because the quantitative results show that the majority of employees in the organisation has a higher university level education. The growing number of western MNCs operating in the country have facilitated HR professionals in order to adopt the best HR

practices, proving HPWS to be more effective in the country context. This also suggested that a higher education of employees strengthens their skills and abilities, which pave the paths towards a motivated and professional career.

However, it can be argued that a higher education is not always nearly enough when it comes to performing well in the job. Often it can be seen that an employee with an outstanding educational qualification cannot come up with brilliant ideas or better solutions to problems. In such cases, even theoretical or academic knowledge fail to push employees further. Which is why, based on the HR managers' perception, the training and development programme is the strongest indicator of employee motivation to perform well. The managerial interview findings claim that an investment such as the training programmes can nurture the employees into developing their skills and knowledge and also make them the biggest contributors to organisational success. Having been invested upon, the employees are said to return their efforts to contribute to the organisational performance. (Raja et al., 2011; Karthik, 2012).

Since telecom organisations are considered to be knowledge-based industries, they invest heavily in comprehensive training opportunities by providing online training programmes, on the job training, off the job training, foreign training etc. These people development practices are the core of the organisational strategy which positively relates to employee performance outcome. In addition, previous research suggested that a supportive environment, such as one that provides training and development opportunities in the organisation, leads to a higher level of employee affective commitment (Zaleska and de Menezes, 2007; Kehoe and Wright, 2013; El - Ghalayini, 2016). However, in the quantitative phase of study, training and development HR practice had to be excluded from the five bundles of HPWS dimension due to the insignificant employee responses. Even though the HR managers assured that this was the most important factor, the employees did not seem to be concerned enough. But previous studies suggested that the perception of the manager may

differ significantly from that of the employee. Nonetheless, the study implied that an indirect positive link stands between training and development HR practices and employee performance.

The evidence from the interview also shows compensation and performance appraisal as an important tool that motivates employees to perform well and stay committed to the organisation. It was evident that studied organisations have compensation policies based on employee performance appraisal. These findings help to further support and validate our quantitative findings and are in line with other researchers (Absar et al., 2012; Rima and Islam, 2013; Demirbag et al., 2014; Martin-Garcia and Tomas, 2014). For example, Absar et al. (2012) argues that merit-based compensation practices have a positive impact on organisational performance. Similarly, Rima and Islam (2013) asserts that the standardized compensation system in the service industry is one of the most important tools to ensure employee motivation. These findings are consistent with our quantitative and qualitative findings.

The interview findings further claimed that the communication and information practices of the studied organisations are transparent and decisions are made collectively among the employees and HR managers. The HR managers conduct surveys, regular one-to-one meetings with employees and organise company social events to build up a strong bond between the employees. At present days, it is common to find employees who value their passion for work over money, and who look for a workplace that can offer challenging jobs but a comfortable work environment. It is a balance of the two results in job satisfaction while the employees pursue their professional goals. This further strengthens the argument of researchers that transparent internal communication practices and information sharing among colleagues and management result in a higher level of trust between management and employees which in turn improves the performance of the latter (Arthur, 1994; Abdullah et al., 2011; Selden et al., 2013; Demirbag et al., 2014).

However, in relation to power distance, nepotism and favouritism existing in the studied organisation were not as transparent as they should be. Responses from the HR managers could be deemed as unreliable and were also contradictory to the quantitative phase of the study. Power distance, nepotism and favouritism are phenomena that every Bangladeshi is aware of and abides to as a natural reflex. It is stitched with precision in every context of life, being an underlying shadow in Bangladeshi culture. As a consequence, it weakens the prospects of eventual success of the country in a way that no other disaster can. Yet, almost no commoner can acknowledge its existence freely, being a prisoner of it for the longest of times. In an office culture, such prejudice is not only a matter of embarrassment for Bangladeshis but also a reason for ultimate sufferings. However, such practices cannot be expected from MNCs who actively implement HPWS and are a part of foreign subsidiaries.

Accordingly, the presence of such unfair practices could be the reason for eventual doom. Through results of the quantitative phase of the study, the researcher pursued to find reasons behind the existence of such unfairness, even in MNCs that claim to implement fair policies for all employees.

The author of this study has work experience in the country and it was not difficult to establish a good network during field visits in Bangladesh. The author had visited the organisations several times and had developed personal relationships with some of the top-level executives and employees. Therefore, the researcher could probe with more questions in a diplomatic manner when queries were either denied or avoided. The interview findings revealed that MNCs' top-level HR managers are operating in the traditional management style even when they are following the western style of HPWS practices in their organisations. Understanding the Bangladeshi culture, the researcher can assert that Bangladeshi employees are ready for change especially in the MNC context and are not relegated to whether or not senior managers

actually believe that they should and could benefit from the opportunities via HPWS. The country is no longer an LDC (least developed country) but a developing country.

However, if the management approach can be categorized to either scupper this opportunity via a lack of drive or sincerity, or to question the intention of other employees, the managers' actions are in direct contravention of this theory and in fact may erode any chance of it having a positive effect for employees. Undeniably, uneven or biased recruitment practices adversely affect employee morale despite the presence of HPWS present in the organisation. HR policies should be equal for both HR managers and employees, avoiding any sort of personal or cultural bias. Otherwise, employees may lose trust towards their HR managers and performance will decrease. Nepotism and favouritism practices in the Bangladeshi organisations are common practice and are considered normal for employees and HR managers. The literature review indicated that nepotism and favouritism create an unprofessional phenomenon and it paralyses HR practices. Organisations which prohibit such negative practices are more effective than those who allow it (Abdallah et al., 1994; Arasli and Tumer, 2008). It is worth mentioning that personal relationships and experience provided the researcher background knowledge about the HRM phenomenon in the context of MNCs in Bangladesh. The researcher could therefore confirm with reasonable confidence that the perception of the HR managers of the studied organisations are molded in the traditional authoritarian practice and that their subordinates are treated accordingly.

Past research demonstrated that MNCs are considered as high performing organisations in Bangladesh and that these organisations are entirely performance-oriented (Firoz and Chowdhury, 2013). It can be argued these organisations are particular about providing extensive training for their line managers where they are trained to be more efficient at monitoring employees' abilities and judge employee performance and achievements fairly. This in turn enhances employees' trust towards their immediate managers. Line managers or

immediate supervisors are the key contacts to whom employees can express their concerns, suggestions or ideas. Thus, HR managers are the important contributors of HR operations in the organisations (Innocenti et al., 2011; Alfes et al., 2012).

However, the interview findings contradict the previous research and suggest that communication between HR managerial and employee levels is not as transparent as it appears. In reality the communication maybe one-sided and tinged with fear, leaving employees unable to voice their opinions. In a high power distance culture the manager's role is like that of an authoritarian leader and employees are expected to do what they are told (Prince, 2011; Abdullah, et al., 2011; Ghosh, 2011). The relationship between employee and the manager becomes too formal, creating a sharp difference to their respective roles in their organisation (Triguero-Sanchez et al., 2013). Fear among employees is a common trait in Bangladeshi culture and is considered as the manifestation of respect. Yet this cultural trait is also the biggest barrier that blocks all possibilities of liberal communication between HR managers and employees. The need to express an opinion is instantly overshadowed by the fear of getting it wrong, contradicting the manager's interests or simply making a fool of oneself. In more serious cases, the employees may even suffer from the fear of losing their jobs if they voice their true opinions.

Furthermore, biased HR practices towards employees' training, internal promotion and performance appraisals are very common practices and it depends on how well employees get along with their direct line manager. Or, they may have connections with the senior HR managers or relatives in the organisation and this phenomenon remains acceptable to both employees and HR managers. These findings are consistent with literature discussed in earlier chapters indicating that HR practices become ineffective when employees compete with family members or friends of the manager in the organisation (Hayajenh, 1994; Arasli and Tumer, 2008). It is a common scenario for HR managers and other senior executives to easily befriend

those employees who share common backgrounds such as being from the same educational institute or having the same affluent family background. Employees from affluent families or who have links with political parties are given certain privileges that can be deemed unprofessional when compared to how others who do not share the same family background are being treated (Mahmood, 2004; Choudhury and Mahmood, 2012). This happens with more intensity when these employees have the prospect of favourable conditions in the future, such as promises of political relations.

However, it can be argued that these unfair practices do not affect all the employees in the same manner. Such attitudes have an adverse effect on those employees who are ambitious and enthusiastic towards their work and career. Working in an uncompetitive environment potentially makes employees dissatisfied and demoralizes them. Employees also may lose interest in their jobs or with their colleagues, and loyalty towards the organisation may diminish completely, having negative effects on the employees' attitude. According to previous studies (Wu and Chaturvedi, 2009; Messersmith et al., 2011; Muduli et al., 2016) employee attitudes are more affected by the practices than the HR policies. Hence, when policies and practices are not aligned, employees are most likely to exhibit negative attitudes due to the perception of unfair treatment (Wu and Chaturvedi, 2009; El-Ghalayini, 2016). Therefore, despite the limited scope of job opportunities, it is expected that due to unfair treatment, those employees will be dissatisfied in the workplace. Under this stressed and unfair environment, employees' performance will decrease while their intention to quit increases, which in turn negatively affects employees' productivity and performance (Ates, 2005, Bute, 2009). Although not all employees can manage to quit, knowing that it will be hard to find another job and sustain their responsibilities under the conditions of living in a country such as Bangladesh. However, with regards to qualified employees, the scenario is different. Usually these employees tend to leave

their jobs as well as their country, a scenario that explains the high turnover rate among talented employees.

The present study does not propose ways to change the cultural beliefs as they are strongly embedded in the autocratic leadership style. However, this study shows MNCs work directly with people who hold values of high power distance, which may negatively influence employee attitude that in turn negatively impact employees' performance in the foreign subsidiaries. This also implies that it would have a negative impact on the employees' job satisfaction, diminishing their trust in management and their affective commitment and loyalty towards their organisation. Overall, such organisations may not be able to achieve organisational objectives, effectiveness and performance and competitive advantages in the long run. Therefore, HR managers of MNCs need to change their traditional mindset, treat employees equally and improve social bonding at the workplace to bring out the employees' talents and increase their performance. HR managers working in the organisation need to focus on enhancing employee positive attitude by additionally adopting more tangible changes. These include unbiased performance appraisal, internal promotion based on performance appraisal, fair recruitment policy for executive and managerial levels, involving the employees in decision making by sharing information and transparent communication practices among all employee levels. Organisations can train their HR managers to connect with the subordinates on a human level, narrow down the power distance and minimize their differences in relationships. This creates a comfortable environment in which employees can develop and utilize their skills and abilities and stay motivated towards the organisation. A people-oriented strategy is a source of competitive advantage because unlike cost, technology or new product development it is not possible to imitate (Barney and Wright, 1998; Arasli and Tumer, 2008, Fu et al., 2015).

In light of the above evidence, the researcher raises an alarming issue for the context of the country, the 'brain drain' of Bangladesh. Having found evidence of unfair practices even in such top-rated MNCs, the researcher suggests that this is one of the main factors behind the continuous migration of highly educated citizens to other developed countries. Being a central part of the culture itself, unfair practices and insecurity are expected and have culturally become a norm. Due to this, the resulting skills and knowledge of higher education from developed countries almost never migrate back to their nation. Along with its financial investments, the country is also losing the supposed contribution of these highly skilled employees as well as intellectual capital that could have otherwise added more value to the organisations and the country.

Summary

In this chapter, the qualitative phase of the study is presented and discussed in detail. Based on the interview with the HR managers as key informants, this indicates that although the studied organisations have a HPWS in their formal structure and strategy, the success of the organisation is determined by HR managers' initiative and how well they are implementing these practices.

The qualitative questions were based on quantitative findings of the study to cross cheque and validate the employee level data with managerial perception of HPWS and its impact on employee performance. There were three key informants from each organisation so a total of nine respondents were interviewed. The semi-structured interview questions were divided into four major key themes, such as high performance work system (HPWS), employee performance, employee attitudes and institutional context. Together with the quantitative results, the semi-structured interview findings support the notion that employee perception of HPWS, job satisfaction, affective commitment, trust in management and the employee performance are consistent with the manager's perception. This demonstrates that HPWS help managers to motivate employees to boost their employee attitude which in turn enhances employee performance outcome. However, it is worth noting that managerial perception of power distance, nepotism and favouritism differs from employee level perception. It appears that multinational managers do not agree on the facts that any kind of nepotism, favouritism and power distance between superior and subordinates can negatively impact HPWS in the organisation and it may be negatively associated with employee performance. In the Bangladeshi culture, this phenomenon is considered to be a normal behavior and therefore managers do not directly answer such queries. These findings are also consistent with the literature review discussed in the earlier chapters. (Khatri and Tsang, 2003; Pippidi, 2003; Mahmood, 2004; Sadozai et al., 2012; Nadeem et al., 2015). If the managers are desirous of

improving employees' perception towards HPWS at work, then they should change their cultural mindset and treat all employees' equally without any bias and lower the power distance in order to be a successful HPWS organisation. In the next conclusion chapter, the researcher combines the findings from both quantitative and qualitative phases of the study to reach a unified conclusion. This is followed by discussions on research contributions, limitations, as well as directions for future research and implications.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

Introduction

The main aim of this chapter is to discuss the results of the present study. There are five sections in the chapter. The first section briefly discussed the research question, set of objectives and conceptual model based on the knowledge gap. Secondly, the chapter summarised the key findings of quantitative and qualitative analysis based on the each of the objectives and proposed hypotheses of the study. Then the chapter discussed contribution to knowledge and validity of the findings of the present research, followed by a discussion on the limitations of the current study and direction for future research.

7.1 Research aim, question and objectives

The aim of the present study is to fill the existing knowledge gap by investigating the link between western HPWS and employee performance in non-western context in Bangladesh. In addition, the study has examined how institutional environment affects HPWS and employee performance of MNCs in the context of Bangladeshi telecom sector. The literature review identified that several studies have been conducted around the globe that focuses on HPWS and organisational performance. Most of the studies has indicated that HPWS have a positive impact on performance outcome. However, the underlying mechanism by which HPWS contribute to the performance outcome has received far less attention. HPWS studies have emphasised that it is crucial to consider the impact of HPWS on employee attitudes which are the main indicators and may be considered as intermediary mechanisms in the link between HPWS and performance. Therefore, the present study chose job satisfaction, affective commitment and trust in management as mediating variables for further investigations to find why they remain a 'black box' in the relationship between HPWS and employee performance.

The explanation of why and how HPWS is linked with firm performance rely on number of theories. However, there are two dominating theories in SHRM field which influences the connection between HR practices and performance link. The resource-based view (RBV) and ability-motivation-opportunity (AMO) theory. As such, the present study has relied on these two theories through which the relationship between HPWS and employee performance has been explained.

In addition, the literature review showed that there is insignificant number of HPWS study relating to non-western contexts especially concerning to South Asian Countries in particular Bangladesh. The purpose of this research is to bridge the existing gap by investigating; the link between western HPWS and employees' performance in Bangladesh. Since multinational organisations operate across different national boundaries with different institutional environment, management of HR in the overseas subsidiaries are inherently complex. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the country's national and cultural context since there still remains a significant gap in understanding the relationship between HPWS and employee performance in the MNC's. Furthermore, multinational organisations are concerned with the design and implementation of the HR strategies and practices that fit in both global and in local contexts. As such, institutional context has been explored and based on the extensive literature review, role of power distance, nepotism and favouritism variables has been identified as a moderating role, which is likely to affect the strength of HPWS and employee performance.

In light of the above knowledge gap, the study seeks to address the main research question:

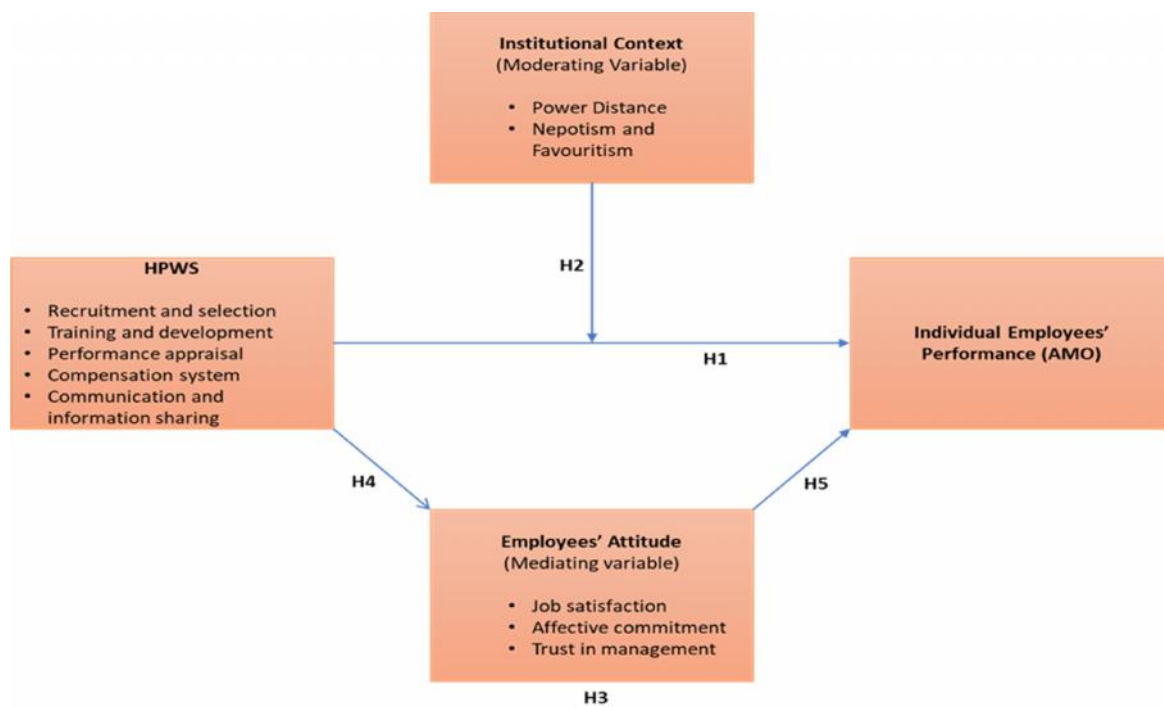
To what extent does high performance work system (HPWS) impact the individual employee's performance in the Bangladeshi telecom sector?

To answer this question, the following research objectives have been pursued:

- 1) To explore the relationship between HPWS and employees' performance;
- 2) To critically analyse how HPWS impact employees' attitude, which in turn affects employees' performance; and,
- 3) To examine how institutional environments, affect HPWS and employees' performance in Bangladesh.

In addition, based on the extensive literature review and knowledge gap, the researcher has developed a conceptual model and proposed hypotheses which is the main features of the present study.

The Conceptual model of the study:



Conceptual model

Consistent with the AMO theory, the proposed model justifies that the HPWS positively impact individual employee performance through the mediating variables of employee's attitudinal outcomes (job satisfaction, affective commitment and trust in management). The study also

provides insights by demonstrating that the normative component of institutional contexts (power distance, nepotism and favouritism) moderate the relationship between HPWS and individual employees' performance. A mix-method research approach has been used to explore the research question. Following is the detailed discussion of the key research findings.

7.2 Summary of key findings

7.2.1 Quantitative Phase of the study

Objective 1: To explore the relationship between HPWS and employees' performance;

To address this objective, the quantitative phase was conducted in order to examine the linkages between HPWS and employee performance by surveying 320 employees from three selected MNCs in Bangladesh. The results of the study indicated that HPWS positively affected employees' performance of three leading telecom multinationals in Bangladesh. The findings assert that the studied organisations have well planned HPWS in place that reflect employee's perception of fairness. The assumption is that the use of HPWS will have positive employee outcome through bundle of HR practices i.e.; recruitment and selection practices, performance appraisal, compensation, communication and information sharing. The study findings also found that these practices created more capable and motivated human resources to do their job to provide further support to HPWS-employee performance link in the studied organisations. As a result, employees are more engaged into their work to enhance greater performance in the work place. In addition, based on the AMO framework, the conceptual model also suggested that the performance of employees will rise when they are able to do it better (i.e.; abilities); they are motivated adequately (i.e.; motivation); and when the environment of the workplace is supportive of the employee's to share their opinions (i.e.; opportunity to participate).

The study results showed that the organisations had supportive environment by implementing effective HPWS and thus employees had necessary abilities, motivation and opportunities to perform well in the organisation. This fulfils the first objective of the study by confirming the

Hypothesis-1 *HPWS practices directly and positively impact the employee performance (as reflected in AMO)*. This finding confirms the previous research findings (Fu et al; 2015; Obeidat, et al; 2016; Hefferman and Dundan, 2016) and extends the previous research on AMO model by testing the role of the HPWS-performance link, providing further evidence that strengthens the AMO theory of strategic HRM field.

Objective 2: To critically analyse how HPWS impact employees' attitude, which in turn affects employees' performance.

The conceptual model suggests that HPWS enhance employee performance directly and also indirectly through employee attitudes. Therefore, to address the research objective, we explored this relationship. Our quantitative findings provide strong support for the mediating effect of HPWS on employees' performance via employee attitude and confirms *Hypothesis 3: The relationship between HPWS practices and employee performance is mediated by employee attitude*. These findings are consistent with previous research that positively linked employees' attitudinal variables to enhanced employee performance (Messersmith et al., 2011, Mansour et al; 2013, Ananthram et al, 2018).

Based on the AMO theory, ability enhancing practices, such as employees are supported through intensive training and development programmes and by vigorous selection process organisations recruit appropriate candidate for the specific job. Therefore, employee's knowledge, abilities and skills are enhanced which in turn positively influences employees' job satisfaction. Because, employees are satisfied when they realise that their potential suits the job role well and develop increased abilities for their respective duties. This positively affects their performance. Consequently, transparent communication system and opportunities to share information among employees and manager in the organisation create trust in management because employees can share their views and opinions regarding their work as well as they can take part on organisational decision making process. This enhanced opportunity of participation results in enhanced employee performance. This provision tends to develop the employees' confidence further as they are more self-sufficient in their task performance. As

the employees participate more in quality circle programme, their morale is enhanced and consecutively increasing performance (Jiang et al., 2012).

In addition, unbiased performance appraisal and compensation motivate employees to stay committed towards their organisation for a longer period of time and positively relate to performance outcomes. The present research findings support that motivation enhancing practices such as performance appraisal and compensation policies including performance bonus and other incentives tend to motivate employees to perform well as they feel that they are receiving fair treatment from their organisation and consequently show positive responses towards their organisation with an enhancement in performance. From this angle, the present study argues that the enhancement of skills, motivation and knowledge in individual employee along with opportunities provided by the organisation through strong HPWS, most likely lead to greater trust in their management, higher job satisfaction and increased commitment in the organisation they work which lead to better performance in their job. In other words, HPWS positively impact employee attitude i.e.; job satisfaction, affective commitment and trust in management which in turn positively enhance employee performance. Thus, the study findings validate the AMO theory, fulfil the study objective and confirms *Hypothesis 4: HPWS practices positively impact employee attitude and Hypothesis 5: Employee attitude positively predicts employee performance*. It is important to take into consideration - how employees' feel about the HPWS used in their organisation? This is more important factor than the HPWS practices themselves. Employees' observations of HPWS are much more important, because it directly affects employees' attitudes within their organisation. It is found that positive attitudes enhance employees' performance. The study also confirms previous findings of Messersmith et al; (2011), Wang and Xu (2017), Dasgupta and Singh, (2014), and Ananthram et al; (2018).

Objective 3: To examine how institutional environments, affect the HPWS and employee performance.

Based on the third objective of the study, the quantitative results indicated that the power distance, nepotism and favouritism negatively moderate the relationship between HPWS and employee performance in the studied organisation and confirmed *Hypothesis 2: Institutional context (power distance, nepotism and favouritism) will moderate the relationship between HPWS practices and employees' performance*. It appears that organisations' managers are engaged in preferential treatment by favouring friends and family members to fulfil their own personal interest. The result indicates that the organisations are prone to authoritarian and bureaucratic in nature of their managerial practices which contradict with the HPWS organisations. However, question arises to what extent these unfair practices can ensure the organisations long term sustainability, if they do not take any proper steps to prevent such occurrences. The result of the study is consistent with the previous findings that the relationship between SHRM practices and performance depends on normative components of institutional theory (Gaur et al; 2010; Triguero-Sanchez et al, 2013; Hauff, et al; 2014).

The above discussed quantitative findings of the study facilitate the researcher to develop the interview questions for the key informants (managers) to validate and confirm this phase of the study. The findings of the quantitative phase confirm all the objectives and the proposed hypotheses of the study. (see Table: 5.15).

7.2.2 Qualitative phase of the study

The qualitative phase was commenced in order to further explore the quantitative findings by interviewing key informants (managers) from the three selected organisations. The qualitative data were gathered from semi structured interviews with nine HR managers of the three studied organisations and had been analysed using a thematic approach. The interviews with the managers facilitated to understand how managers perceived influences of HPWS upon employee performance.

The interview findings supported five dimensions of all the HR practices adopted by the organisations under study. Managerial interview findings revealed that all the organisations' recruitment policies are based on vigorous selection criteria to ensure the employees are well suited for the jobs. Most of the employees are highly educated from business schools with strong IT background which is reflected in the demographic information (Table-5.2). These findings reveal that highly qualified and educated employees in MNCs demonstrate enhanced level of performance due to their skills, knowledge and capabilities.

Further to this, literature review indicated that training and development practices led to enhanced level of employee performance. The interview findings are also consistent with the literature review discussed in chapter two. Although the researcher excluded the training and development HR practices from the HPWS dimensions in the quantitative phase due to low employee responses, but the managerial discussion revealed that training and development are the most important HR practices which lead to employee motivation and performance. Interview findings also revealed that all the organisations invested heavily to train their employees to cope with the business challenges and workforce competitiveness. These indicate that, employees are getting opportunities to develop their skills which is valued by the employees' more than direct economic benefits. As a result, employees are more satisfied in the job and they feel that they are better suited to the task and better able to perform their respective duties. Therefore, the findings confirm that employee job satisfaction in the work place positively affects employee performance in the organisations and thereby validate the quantitative results.

As regards to compensation system, all the interviewed HR managers opined that the compensation policy is the most important HR policies to attract good employees. The HR managers in the studied organisations also emphasized that the employee's compensation and performance bonus are designed to motivate employees to perform well in the studied

organisation. In addition, promotion opportunities based on performance appraisal, recognition, transparent communication system between HR managers and employees and physical work environment have significant impacts on employee's positive attitude in the organisations. This leads to higher productivity and performance.

It is noteworthy that, the HR managers' perception towards, power distance, nepotism and favouritism, (qualitative phase) contradicts the findings of employee level perception (quantitative phase). These contradictory findings indicate that like other emerging countries, Bangladeshi organisations are deeply rooted in their traditional authoritarian patriarchal approaches to their management practices. However, the findings indicate that organisations under study, work directly with people who hold values of high power distance, which may negatively influence employee attitude and which in turn negatively impact employees' performance. This also suggests that, it would have negative impact on the employees' job satisfaction, diminishing trust in management and their affective commitment and loyalty towards their organisation. Overall, such organisations may not be able to achieve organisational objective, effectiveness and performance and competitive advantages in the long run. Therefore, HR managers of MNCs in Bangladesh need to change their traditional mindset, treat employees equally and improve social bonding at the workplace to bring out the employees' talent and increase their performance.

In light of the above quantitative and qualitative findings, the study demonstrates a positive relationship between HPWS and employees' performance in non-western contexts. In addition, these relationships are mediated through employee attitudinal aspects by shedding light on the processes through which HR practices affect employees' performance. However, it can be argued that the disadvantages of power distance between HR managers and employees and widespread nepotism and favouritism in the organisation, weaken the relationship between HPWS and employee performance. Such organisations will not be able to achieve competitive

advantage through its employees which ultimately may lead to employee turnover at micro level and at macro level a serious consequence of 'brain drain' from the developing countries to the advanced industrial countries. The researcher anticipates that this is one of the prime reasons behind the continuous migration of highly educated citizens to other developed countries. Due to this, the resulting skills and knowledge of higher education from developed countries almost never migrate back to their nations. Along with its investment, the country is also losing the due contribution of these highly skilled employees' as well as intellectual capital who could have otherwise added more value to the organisations and the country.

7.3 Contribution to knowledge

There has significantly been a growing development in HRM throughout the globe; however, the majority of studies has focused on advanced industrial societies. Only a limited number of studies have considered HPWS in the context of developing countries. The literature review shows that there is a gap in HPWS study relating to non-western contexts, especially relating to South Asian Countries in particular Bangladesh.

From theoretical standpoint, the current study contributes to the existing literature in several ways.

- a) The study contributes and extends the theoretical perspective underpinning the underlying mechanisms through which HPWS influence employee performance. By doing so, the study develops and tests a conceptual model, which shows a direct and indirect link between HPWS and employee performance. The conceptual model identified and tested different mediators and moderators in order to understand the mechanisms underlying the relationship between HPWS and employee performance. Further, influenced by the concept of 'black box' a conceptual model investigates the mediating effects of job satisfaction; affective commitment and trust in management as

transmission pathways to channelize the relationship between HPWS and employee performance through the lenses of Ability-Motivation-Opportunity (AMO) theory.

- b) The study advances the literature by understanding how institutional process interacts with the HPWS practices in MNCs operating in Bangladesh. Thus, the study also attempts to examine how the role of normative dimensions of institutional environment affects the high-performance work system (HPWS) practices by examining important but less studied moderating variables (i.e.; power distance, nepotism and favouritisms). The conceptual model is a unique contribution to the existing literature and the model can be tested in any other part of the world in a similar context. Furthermore, the results of the study will help other researchers choose significant variables when they conduct similar studies.

Employee's knowledge, ability and skills help to build organisations' intangible assets. Employee performance is crucial component for improving the service sector of any country (Matzler and Renzl, 2007; Akhter et. al., 2016). The high performance organisations provide positive feedback to their employees' by showing them that organisation is concerned about their employees in order to improve the quality and productivity of the work. Consequently, these positive feedback results into enhanced employee outcome (Tang and Tang, 2012). Having said that, it is evident that the majority of strategic HRM researchers have focused on the manufacturing sector, neglecting other sectors (Katou et al., 2014; Akhter et al., 2016; Mansour et al., 2013), in particular the service sector. This leads to partial understanding of HRM, because studies related to manufacturing sector cannot be generalized to the service sector due to its diverse nature, including the intangibility of service practices and outcomes, the concurrent production and consumption of products, and customers' involvement in services delivery (Liao et al., 2009).

- c) This study extends the analysis of the HPWS-performance connections to the telecom service industry in Bangladeshi context, which is growing at a faster pace. Moreover, in Bangladesh, high tech sector such as telecom organisations are usually driven through knowledge based resources. Termed as being knowledge intensive, these organisations value the knowledge, skills and abilities rooted in the mind-set of their employees as the vital sources of competitive advantage. The researcher, therefore, considers this sector as an ideal ground for a thorough study of the human resources of an organisation. The telecom organisations also provide researchers the platform to examine the operations of HPWS under the context of knowledge intensive organisations. This research is important because to the best of our knowledge, it is the first empirical study on the HPWS-performance relationship in the context of high-tech multinational subsidiaries operating in Bangladesh.
- d) The majority of HPWS research demonstrates quantitative research approach. Only a few exceptions have used qualitative studies to do so (see, for example, Qiao et al., 2015; Koser et al., 2018). The current study has contributed by adopting mixed method research approach to answer the proposed research question. This is because each research method has its own strength and weakness. Therefore, collecting both survey data and in-depth interview with the HR managers, facilitated to confirm there is a positive link between HPWS and employee performance in the telecom organisations in Bangladesh.

7.3.1 Suggestions to the practitioners

The results of the study demonstrate a positive relationship between HPWS and employees' performance in non-western contexts. The study has proposed that employees' positive attitudes act as transmission pathways between HPWS and employees' performance. It was

observed that HPWS shaped employees' perceptions that influenced their performance outcomes by affecting the way they felt or behaved. A satisfied and committed workforce is the solid foundation of an organisation's ability to compete in the marketplace. HR managers and supervisors should closely monitor the implementation of HPWS in their organisations because these practices foster positive work attitudes among their employees, which in turn enhance their performance.

In addition, equal attention should be given to the institutional context of a country when MNCs are operating in a different institutional environment and implementing HPWS because such processes strengthen the perception of fair procedures and result in positive employees' performance. This study provides insights by demonstrating that the institutional context of Bangladesh weakens the relationship between HPWS and employees' performance. One of the main implications of the study findings is that there is a disconnection between HR managers and executive level employee's perspective regarding the extent of HPWS existence in the organisation. From the employee level survey and interview findings from the HR managers, the study confirmed that MNCs of Bangladesh still running under traditional authoritarian management practices where every process is considered as a common trend repeated for many years and therefore nobody cares to change the deeply rooted mind-set.

These findings indicate that power distance, nepotism and favouritism present in the organisation may cause negative responses, if the organisations do not have well-planned HPWS in place. If an organisation operating under unfair practices by favouring their friends and relatives, then the management should not expect affective commitment from the employees' working in the organisation. Moreover, intended HPWS should match the actual practices implemented by the organisation. Otherwise employees' trust towards the management may not exist despite well executed HR practices (Wright and Nishii, 2004, Boxall et al, 2007). Policies and practices should be utilised accurately by the organisations

and these must avoid any sort of cultural and personal biasness towards employees.

The result of the study concluded that organisations must take institutional context into serious consideration when they design and implement their HPWS in the organisation. The HR managers across hierarchy should try to minimise power distance and promote positive perceptions among employees in regards to HPWS. Positive perceptions of these HPWS dimension will create positive attitude among employees and ultimately contribute to enhanced individual employee performance. Also, changing the mind-set of a national culture may take centuries (Wahid and Hyams-Ssekasi, 2018). People not only hold on to their culture but place their own personal interest and values in the forefront. Top level HR managers do not believe that change is necessary therefore often misuse their authority in the organisation. Adequate training should be provided to those who are in the key positions in the organisation to gain local knowledge and experience while transferring HPWS to a different cultural and institutional environment. Managers are the main mechanisms in operation of the organisation to stimulate and bring changes in traditional mind-set. Failure to do so will result in improper execution of HPWS, which will result in decreased employees' performance. However, these suggestions and recommendations can act as a revolution against deeply rooted unfair practices in the organisation.

Finally, it can be inferred that multinational organisations operating in Bangladesh need to devote substantial resources to adopt HPWS to enhance employees' positive attitudes that will positively impact their performance. Stand-alone HPWS may not be sustainable in the long run and cannot significantly contribute to employees' performance without aligning with employees' positive discretionary behaviour. Organisations can build competitive advantage by creating value in a way that is rare and difficult to copy for competitors. Therefore, it is the organisation's responsibility to take care of its employees and provide support to improve their skills, which will distinguish them from their competitors. Consistent with the resource-based

view (RBV) theory, organisations should realise that they can attain a sustainable competitive advantage thanks to their intellectual capital, i.e., 'the people'. People are the greatest asset of the organisation. The HR practitioners and managers across hierarchy should realize, growth from a broader perspective is only possible when micro activities are initiated by the management of the organisation. The most important resource that needs to grow is its human capital in the organisation. This study is a significant platform to promote understanding on HPWS in a developing country.

7.4 Validity of research findings

The present study has adopted a mixed method research design which allowed the researcher to validate the research findings. The basis for using mixed method research lies in its ability of allowing hypothesis testing while being well informed and grounded in the context. Mix method is appropriate as the study intends to cheque whether western HPWS are implemented to its optimum in the Bangladeshi telecom organisations. The main advantages of adopting quantitative and qualitative research validated and confirmed the result via triangulation. Depending on single data or methods sometimes questions the research validity and reliability. Triangulating the data source therefore have reduced the weakness of adopting a single method.

First of all, during the quantitative phase of the study, the survey questionnaire was designed through three-pronged approach, i.e., literature review, expert interviews and a pilot survey. Conceptual model became a guide for this study in the way the data was gathered and critically analysed. Later on, the survey was reviewed and modified by HR managers of the organisations and other experts in the field to ensure the design of the conceptual model and employee response rate. To increase the validity of the data, the model was tested through a pilot survey which led to the finalisation of the questionnaire. During the quantitative phase of the study, the SEM analysis maximised the objectivity, replicability and generalisability of

findings. The employee level survey allowed the researcher to determine how employee perceived HPWS in the organisation.

In addition, the qualitative method was used to verify the quantitative findings and provide insights that were difficult to gain by surveys alone. Based on the quantitative results the researcher developed a semi-structured interview questions for the HR managers. Thematic analysis facilitated the researcher by providing opportunities to code and categories the data into themes. During the interview, the researcher got opportunities to review HR documents (i.e., job satisfaction survey, performance appraisal, annual report, and newsletter) in the studied organisations and made some useful field observations which facilitated deeper understanding on the actual implementation of HPWS in the studied organisations. These helped to better contextualize and analyse data to conclude based on the research findings. During the survey the researcher was away from the participants, whereas during the interview with the managers, researcher was close to the respondents and obtained valuable insights while spending time with them. The interactions with the respondents allowed the researcher to understand what the managers held true in their minds as no predefined responses could be standardized to register their answers. Therefore, by combining quantitative (employee perception) and qualitative findings (managerial perception) the present study has generated strong evidence to shed light on study objectives and reduced risk of bias arising from relying only on one research method. The mix method also provided an in built approach of validating the findings of the study.

7.5 Limitations and areas of further study

Limitations are inherent in all research. Firstly, the present study worked on a small and purposively selected sample. Therefore, it would not be right to state that the study findings are applicable to all multinationals operating in Bangladesh. The selection of single industry may lead to questions for generalising the findings of the study. The researcher's observation made in this study were limited to descriptions of only three organisations. This also limits the ability of the study to generalise the results.

More studies are required to examine the results of the study by expanding the scope of the research to cover other service industries. In a practical scenario, there are more employee attitudinal variables that may affect employee attitude and performance. Therefore, future study may overcome the limitations of the present study by examining other mediating variables for example, employee engagement, psychological empowerment and organisational citizenship behaviour in the mediation analysis.

In addition, it would not be appropriate to state one simplified view on management practices in Bangladeshi MNCs. Further studies are required to validate the current study and future research can introduce more moderating variables to get a deeper understanding of Bangladeshi cultural traits and its impacts on employees' performance. A wider scope is required because it may help MNC managers to avoid practices that conflict with traditional HR practices in the home country. To get more interesting results of institutional context of a county, future researchers can conduct longitudinal study to observe whether employees and manager perceive HPWS change over period of time in the similar context to extend the boundaries of the HPWS knowledge base beyond the western context.

Furthermore, in the qualitative phase of the study, the present research only interviewed the managers to validate the quantitative findings. Future research may combine semi-

structured, structured interview and focus group discussion with the employees' and managers separately (to provide space for equal participation) in order to achieve the deeper insights of the actual implementation of HPWS in the organisation.

Despite the limitations of the study, the present study fills the knowledge gap and extends the theoretical understanding of the relationship between HPWS and employee performance.

Summary of conclusion

This chapter has provided an overall conclusion of the study commencing from the research question and how the study has addressed the research question and the set of objectives. The study confirms that HPWS have positive affect on employees' performance in a non-western context and the findings also supports similarities with western context. The study adds a strong body of knowledge of HPWS literature to the context of developing countries like Bangladesh which is growing at fast pace. The chapter also pointed out the reasons why the research findings for this study should be considered valid. The findings of the study confirm the resource-based view (RBV) and ability-motivation-opportunity (AMO) theory. Identifying small sample and variable set as its major limitations, the study suggests for broadening of sample, moderating variables and further areas of future studies.

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Appendix I

Participant Information (Quantitative phase)



University of Bolton
Institute of Management
Deane Road, Bolton, BL3 5AB

PhD Study: Survey of High performance Work System (HPWS)

Dear Participant,

I am writing to request your participation in the above survey by completing the attached questionnaire. The questionnaire has been developed with the guidance of your organizations human resource management team. The study aims to examine the HPWS practices and its impact on employee attitude as well as performance outcomes. In addition, the objective of the study is to examine the influence of institutional context of a country institutes the connection that lay between HPWS and employees' performance.

Your participation is voluntary. There are no right or wrong answers. For the study to be meaningful, it is important that you complete all the questions in the survey.

In accordance with the ethics of behavioral science research, individual responses will be completely anonymous. Please return your individual responses in the sealed envelope provided to your line manager.

Thank you for participation in the survey.

Yours sincerely,

Ishraat S. Wahid

PhD Candidate

Appendix II
Questionnaire (Quantitative)

High Performance Work Systems (HPWS)

Survey

University of Bolton, Bolton, UK

Thank you very much for participating in this Doctoral research study. The questionnaire will take approximately 15 minutes. None of your individual response will be disclosed to your own organisation, any other organisation or any other individual. So please feel free to give your fully independent and honest opinion.

Ishraat Wahid (PhD candidate University of Bolton, UK) Email: isw1res@bolton.ac.uk

Kindly read the statement/questions at the left column and tick the appropriate box from 1 to 7 in front of each statement. The responses are from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
HPWS (Practices)							
1. Recruitment & Selection:							
The recruitment & selection practices in this organization are based on selective screening.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
All recruitment in this organization are based on merit (i.e. the best person for the job is selected regardless of their personal characteristics).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
In our organization, line managers and HR managers participate in hiring process.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Training & Development:							
The training opportunities enable me to extend my range of skills and opportunities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I get opportunity to discuss my training and development requirements with my line managers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I get trained for problem solving ability, interpersonal and communication skills in this organization.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
3. Performance Appraisal							
Performance appraisal is reviewed in accordance with organizational goals and needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I receive regular feedback from my manager on how well I do my job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Decision such as promotions, pay increase and training are linked with my performance appraisal.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Compensation system							
Organization provides competitive pay packages to all employees.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I receive Performance bonus for the high performance of my department.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
In our organization compensation is decided on the basis of competence of the employee.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Communication and information sharing							
Employees at different levels within the organization are encouraged to interact with each other.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employee suggestions are implement in full or in part within the organization	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It is easy for me to communicate my thoughts to management.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employee Attitude							
1. Job satisfaction							
Employees in this job have clear paths within these organizations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have sense of job security working in this organization.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel my performance appraisal is fair and unbiased in the organization.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Affective commitment							

Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
I have good opportunities to advance my career by getting promoted.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel like 'part of family' at my organization.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This organization has a great deal of personal meaning to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Trust in Management							
My immediate supervisor makes sure that all employee concerns are heard before decisions are made.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel strong sense of loyalty towards my supervisor and perform well in my job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I can rely on my supervisor to whom I report directly to make sensible decisions for the future.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Statements/ Questions	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Institutional context							
Favortism is not evident in the organization.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Executive who has good connections with political parties have more chance to receive training opportunities, promotion, pay rise.							
During the recruitment process, graduates from foreign countries and local private Universities most likely to get hired than local public Universities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I think in this organization, the relative and acquaintances of managers are given priorities regarding promotion and pay rise.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Statements/ Questions	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
In work related matters, managers have a right to expect obedience from their subordinates.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Once the top-level executive makes a decision, employees should not question it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employee performance							
1. Ability							
Do you think extensive training and development program in your organization helps you to perform well in your job?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The development of team work among employees is encouraged in this organisation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Motivation							
Do you believe that those that perform well in the job have fair chances of being promoted?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you receive performance appraisal and informal feedback from your manager in each 12 months?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Opportunity							
Do you feel that you have good opportunities to share your views and suggestions to your colleagues and manager?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Management involves employees in decision related to overall organizational level performance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Demographic Information

Age	20 to 30 yrs <input type="checkbox"/>	31 to 40 yrs <input type="checkbox"/>	41 to 50 yrs <input type="checkbox"/>	Above 50 yrs <input type="checkbox"/>
Qualification	MBA <input type="checkbox"/>	Master's <input type="checkbox"/>	Bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/>	IT/Telecom <input type="checkbox"/>
Experience	Less than 5 yrs <input type="checkbox"/>	6 to 8 yrs <input type="checkbox"/>	10 to 15 yrs <input type="checkbox"/>	Above 15 yrs <input type="checkbox"/>
Gender	Male <input type="checkbox"/>		Female <input type="checkbox"/>	
Department	Human Resource <input type="checkbox"/>	Finance <input type="checkbox"/>	Technology /IT <input type="checkbox"/>	Marketing <input type="checkbox"/>
	Customer Service <input type="checkbox"/>	Audit <input type="checkbox"/>	Operation <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>
Years in the organisation	Less than 1 yr <input type="checkbox"/>	1 to 2 yrs <input type="checkbox"/>	2 to 5 yrs <input type="checkbox"/>	Above 6 yrs <input type="checkbox"/>

Thank you very much for your time and effort

Appendix III

Key Informant Information (Qualitative phase)



University of Bolton
Institute of Management
Deane Road, Bolton, BL3 5AB

PhD Study: High-performance Work System (HPWS) and employee performance.

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a PhD student at the University of Bolton conducting a research study entitled: *High performance work system (HPWS) and employee performance: Evidence from the Multinational subsidiaries in Bangladesh*. The study focuses on understanding the impact of existing HPWS practices in your organisation and its influence on employee attitude and performance. In addition, the objective of the study is to examine the influence of institutional context of a country institutes the connection that lay between HPWS and employees' performance.

This study assumes that the telecom sector in Bangladesh involves a unique human resource practice in the organisation defining the context. The study is important because this type of research have never been explored using HPWS practices in the high-tech sector in Bangladesh. Therefore, your participation will make a valuable contribution to our knowledge and to the telecom industry.

Your participation is voluntary and will involve face-to-face interview about your opinions and perception concerning the influence of the current HPWS practices executing by your organisation. The interview will take approximately 30 minutes and you have the opportunity to select the time and place for the interview. All interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed. Your decision to take part is voluntary and if you choose to withdraw, there are no adverse consequences. Strict confidentiality in regards to interview will be ensured.

If you have any further questions regarding this research, please contact the undersigned or the research supervisor stated below.

Yours sincerely

Ishraat S. Wahid, PhD Candidate

PhD Supervisor: Dr Denis Hyams-Ssekasi

University of Bolton

Institute of Management

Deane Road, Bolton, BL3 5AB, UK

Email: isw1res@bolton.ac.uk, ishraatw@yahoo.com

Appendix IV
Questionnaire (Qualitative)

Questions

Question-1: Describe how do you perceive HPWS in your organisation?

Question-2: Describe HPWS or HR practices? and its influence(s) on employee performance.

Question-3: Describe how HPWS may influence employees' attitudes.

Question-4: Discuss the influence of power distance, nepotism and favouritism between employee and manager.

Appendix V

Pilot Study

HIGH PERFORMANCE WORK SYSTEMS (HPWS)

Pilot Study

A pilot study, pilot project, pilot test, or pilot experiment is a small-scale preliminary study conducted in order to evaluate feasibility, time, cost, adverse events, and improve upon the study design prior to performance of a full-scale research project (Kumar, 2011).

The study conducted the following analyses in order to test the feasibility of the data:

Table 6: Frequency for age group

Age group	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
20-30	20	21
31-40	45	48
41-50	25	27
Above 50	4	4
Total	94	100

Table 1 reveals the age group of the respondents. Majority 48 percent of the respondents were 31-40 years followed by 27 percent were 41-50 years, 21 percent were 20-30 years and least 4 percent were above 50 years respectively.

Figure 1: Percentage for age group

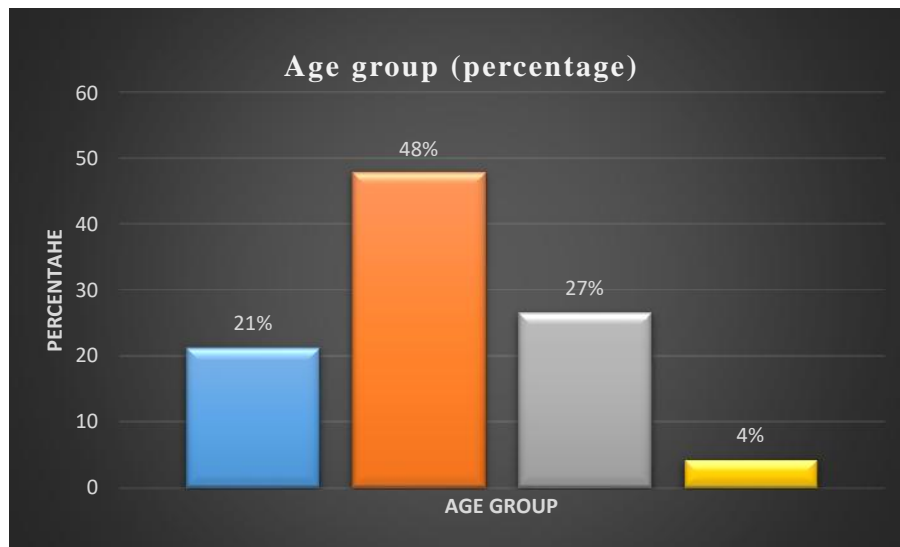


Table 7: Frequency for qualification

Qualification	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
MBA	25	27
Master's	12	13
Bachelor's	22	23
Master of Science	35	37
Total	94	100

Table 2 presents the qualification of the respondent. Majority 37 percent were Master of Science followed by 27 percent were MBA, 23 percent were Bachelor's and least 13 were Master's.

Figure 2: Percentage for qualification

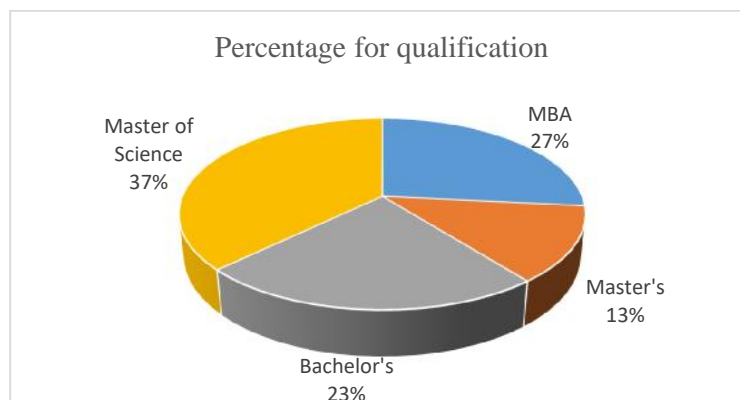
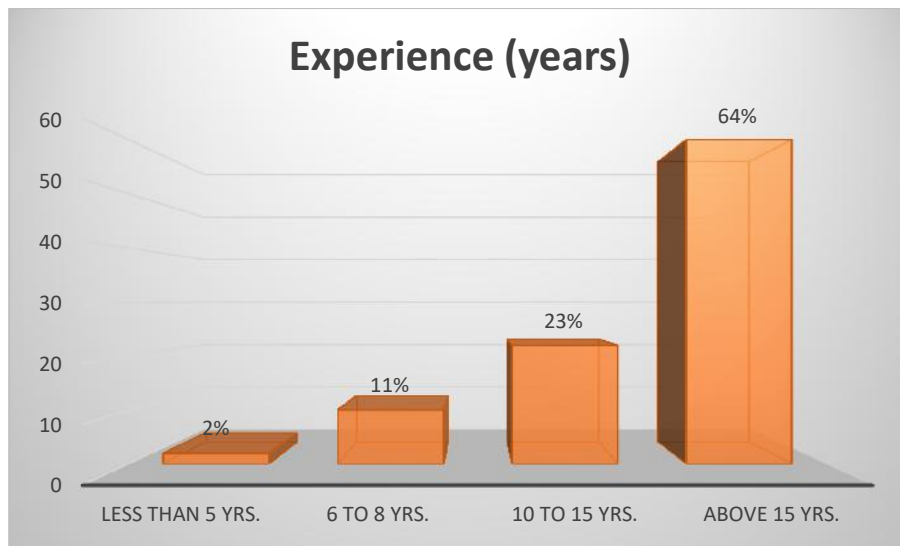


Table 8: Frequency for Experience

Experience	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Less than 5 yrs.	2	2
6 to 8 yrs.	10	11
10 to 15 yrs.	22	23
Above 15 yrs.	60	64
Total	94	100

Table 3 shows the experience of the respondent. Majority 64 percent of the respondents were above 15 years followed by 23 percent were 10 to 15 years, 11 percent were 6 to 8 years and least 2 percent were less than 5 years respectively.

Figure 3 : Percentage for Experience**Table 9: Frequency for Department**

Department	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Human Resource	18	19
Finance	12	13
Technology/IT	22	23

Marketing	23	24
Customer Service	12	13
Audit	1	1
Operation	4	4
Other	2	2
Total	94	100

Table 4 reveals the department of the respondents. Majority 24 percent of the respondents were belong to marketing, followed by 23 percent were Technology/IT, 19 percent were human resource, 13 percent were for both finance and customer service and least 2 percent were belong to other department.

Figure 4: Percentage for Department

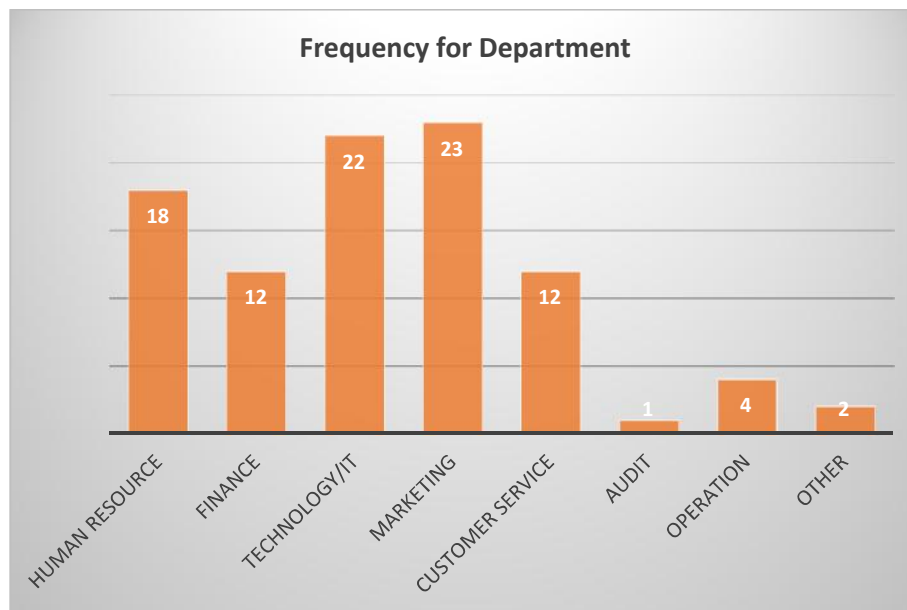
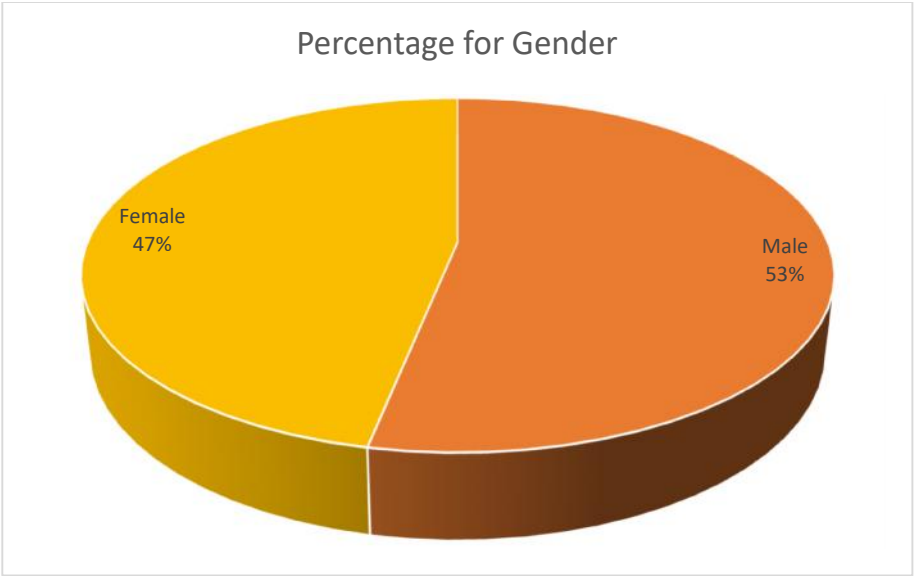


Table 10: Frequency for Gender

Gender	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Male	50	53
Female	44	47
Total	94	100

Table 5 present the gender of the respondents. Majority 53 percent of the respondents were ‘Male’, while 47 percent were ‘Female’.

Figure 5: Percentage for Gender



4.1 Descriptive statistics

Table 11: Descriptive statistics

			Statistic	Std. Error
Recruitment & Selection	Mean		5.6667	.06800
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	5.5326	
		Upper Bound	5.8008	
	5% Trimmed Mean		5.7476	
	Median		6.0000	
	Variance		.897	

	Std. Deviation		.94707	
	Minimum		2.00	
	Maximum		7.00	
	Range		5.00	
	Interquartile Range		1.33	
	Skewness		-1.612	.175
	Kurtosis		3.306	.347
Training and Development	Mean		5.6375	.05358
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	5.5318	
		Upper Bound	5.7431	
	5% Trimmed Mean		5.6775	
	Median		6.0000	
	Variance		.557	
	Std. Deviation		.74632	
	Minimum		3.33	
	Maximum		6.67	
	Range		3.33	
	Interquartile Range		1.00	
	Skewness		-.704	.175
	Kurtosis		-.102	.347
Performance Appraisal	Mean		5.6924	.06600
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	5.5623	
		Upper Bound	5.8226	
	5% Trimmed Mean		5.7367	
	Median		5.6667	
	Variance		.845	
	Std. Deviation		.91926	
	Minimum		2.33	

	Maximum		7.00	
	Range		4.67	
	Interquartile Range		1.33	
	Skewness		-.601	.175
	Kurtosis		.172	.347
Compensation system	Mean		5.2818	.08278
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	5.1185	
		Upper Bound	5.4451	
	5% Trimmed Mean		5.3417	
	Median		5.3333	
	Variance		1.330	
	Std. Deviation		1.15304	
	Minimum		2.00	
	Maximum		7.00	
	Range		5.00	
	Interquartile Range		2.00	
	Skewness		-.577	.175
	Kurtosis		-.369	.347
Communication and information sharing	Mean		5.5189	.06381
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	5.3931	
		Upper Bound	5.6447	
	5% Trimmed Mean		5.5796	
	Median		5.6667	
	Variance		.790	
	Std. Deviation		.88870	
	Minimum		3.00	
	Maximum		7.00	
	Range		4.00	

	Interquartile Range		1.33	
	Skewness		-.899	.175
	Kurtosis		.802	.347
High Performance Work Systems	Mean		5.5595	.04981
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	5.4612	
		Upper Bound	5.6577	
	5% Trimmed Mean		5.5764	
	Median		5.6000	
	Variance		.481	
	Std. Deviation		.69379	
	Minimum		3.53	
	Maximum		6.73	
	Range		3.20	
	Interquartile Range		1.13	
	Skewness		-.243	.175
	Kurtosis		-.636	.347
Job Satisfaction	Mean		5.5941	.05646
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	5.4827	
		Upper Bound	5.7054	
	5% Trimmed Mean		5.6299	
	Median		5.7500	
	Variance		.618	
	Std. Deviation		.78637	
	Minimum		1.75	
	Maximum		7.00	
	Range		5.25	
	Interquartile Range		1.25	
	Skewness		-.894	.175

	Kurtosis		1.915	.347
Affective Commitment	Mean		5.6856	.05465
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	5.5778	
		Upper Bound	5.7934	
	5% Trimmed Mean		5.6991	
	Median		5.6667	
	Variance		.579	
	Std. Deviation		.76117	
	Minimum		3.33	
	Maximum		7.00	
	Range		3.67	
	Interquartile Range		1.00	
	Skewness		-.334	.175
	Kurtosis		-.262	.347
Trust in Management	Mean		5.6323	.06921
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	5.4958	
		Upper Bound	5.7688	
	5% Trimmed Mean		5.6884	
	Median		6.0000	
	Variance		.929	
	Std. Deviation		.96393	
	Minimum		2.67	
	Maximum		7.00	
	Range		4.33	
	Interquartile Range		1.33	
	Skewness		-.912	.175
	Kurtosis		.434	.347
Employee Attitude	Mean		5.6330	.05216

	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	5.5301	
		Upper Bound	5.7359	
	5% Trimmed Mean		5.6625	
	Median		5.7000	
	Variance		.528	
	Std. Deviation		.72644	
	Minimum		4.00	
	Maximum		6.70	
	Range		2.70	
	Interquartile Range		1.20	
	Skewness		-.524	.175
	Kurtosis		-.636	.347
Nepotism / Favoritism	Mean		4.1340	.09797
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	3.9408	
		Upper Bound	4.3273	
	5% Trimmed Mean		4.1044	
	Median		4.0000	
	Variance		1.862	
	Std. Deviation		1.36460	
	Minimum		2.00	
	Maximum		6.75	
	Range		4.75	
	Interquartile Range		2.50	
	Skewness		.318	.175
	Kurtosis		-1.088	.347
Power Distance	Mean		4.7500	.10491
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	4.5431	
		Upper Bound	4.9569	

	5% Trimmed Mean		4.8084	
	Median		4.5000	
	Variance		2.135	
	Std. Deviation		1.46129	
	Minimum		1.00	
	Maximum		7.00	
	Range		6.00	
	Interquartile Range		2.13	
	Skewness		-.376	.175
	Kurtosis		-.668	.347
Institutional Context	Mean		4.3393	.09228
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	4.1573	
		Upper Bound	4.5214	
	5% Trimmed Mean		4.3253	
	Median		4.3333	
	Variance		1.652	
	Std. Deviation		1.28534	
	Minimum		2.17	
	Maximum		6.67	
	Range		4.50	
	Interquartile Range		2.17	
	Skewness		.161	.175
	Kurtosis		-1.091	.347
Employee Performance	Mean		5.5006	.05359
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	5.3949	
		Upper Bound	5.6063	
	5% Trimmed Mean		5.5748	
	Median		5.6111	

	Variance		.557	
	Std. Deviation		.74636	
	Minimum		2.33	
	Maximum		6.56	
	Range		4.22	
	Interquartile Range		.78	
	Skewness		-1.846	.175
	Kurtosis		5.243	.347
Ability	Mean		5.6031	.05593
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	5.4928	
		Upper Bound	5.7134	
	5% Trimmed Mean		5.6726	
	Median		5.6667	
	Variance		.607	
	Std. Deviation		.77895	
	Minimum		2.67	
	Maximum		6.67	
	Range		4.00	
	Interquartile Range		.67	
	Skewness		-1.480	.175
	Kurtosis		2.605	.347
Motivation	Mean		5.3265	.07393
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	5.1806	
		Upper Bound	5.4723	
	5% Trimmed Mean		5.4437	
	Median		5.6667	
	Variance		1.060	
	Std. Deviation		1.02976	

	Minimum		1.00	
	Maximum		6.33	
	Range		5.33	
	Interquartile Range		1.00	
	Skewness		-1.676	.175
	Kurtosis		3.441	.347
Opportunity	Mean		5.5722	.05886
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	5.4561	
		Upper Bound	5.6883	
	5% Trimmed Mean		5.6464	
	Median		5.6667	
	Variance		.672	
	Std. Deviation		.81981	
	Minimum		2.00	
	Maximum		7.00	
	Range		5.00	
	Interquartile Range		.67	
	Skewness		-1.641	.175
	Kurtosis		4.282	.347

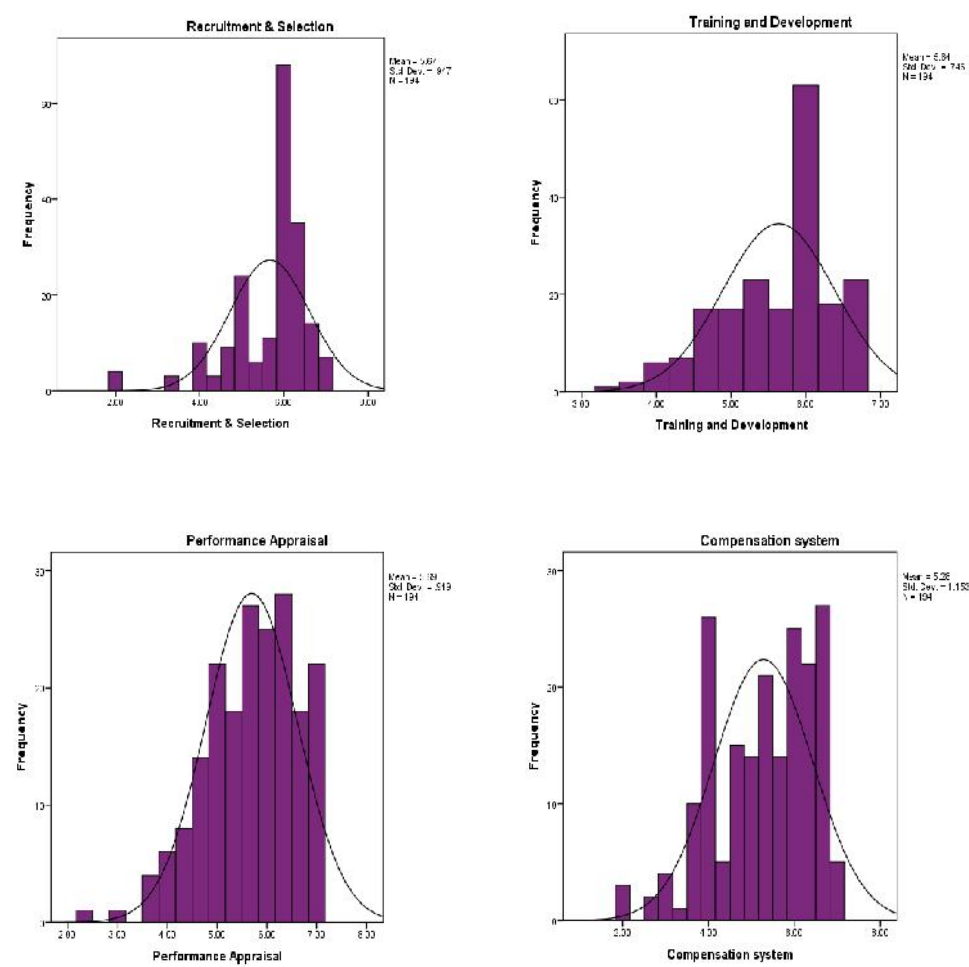
Table 6 presents the descriptive statistics for study variables. The descriptive statistics such as Mean, Median, SD, Variance, Maximum and Minimum value, skewness and kurtosis for the study variable.

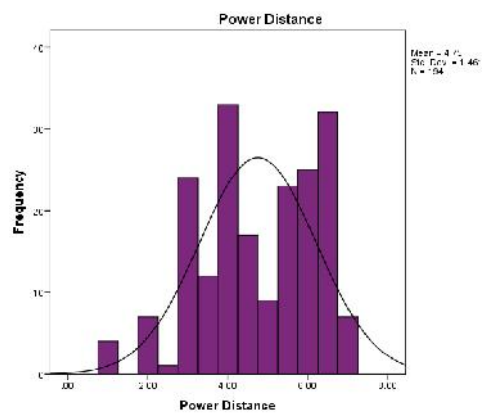
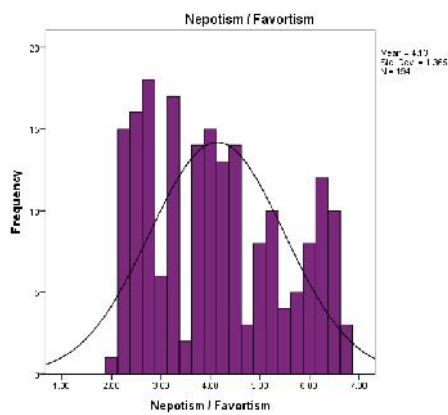
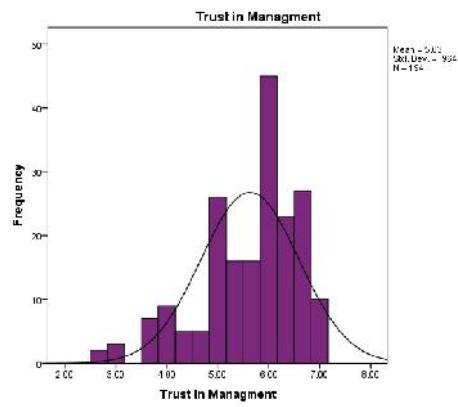
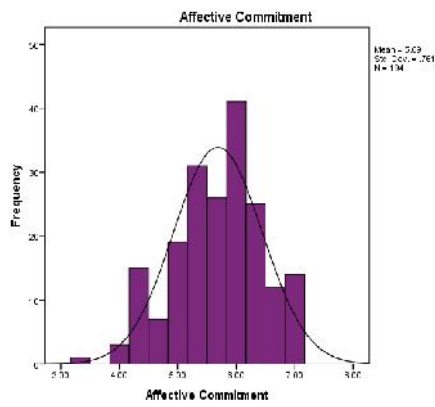
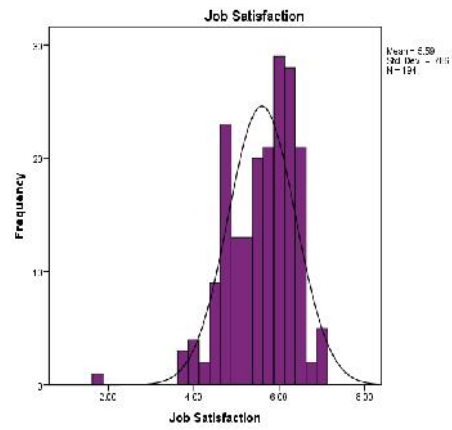
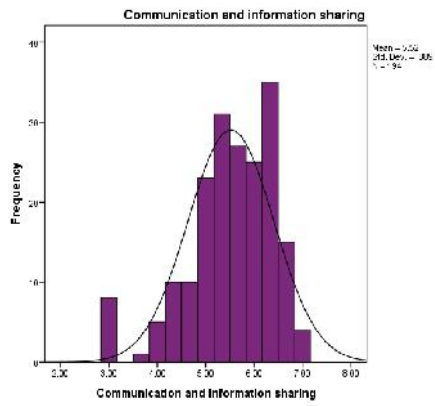
4.2 Tests for Normality

An assessment of the normality of data is a prerequisite for many statistical tests because normal data is an underlying assumption in parametric testing. There are two main methods of assessing normality: graphically and numerically. When testing for normality, we are mainly interested in the Tests of Normality table and the Histogram our numerical and graphical

methods to test for the normality of data, respectively. When a histogram's shape approximates a bell-curve it suggests that the data may have come for a normal population.

Figure 6: Histogram





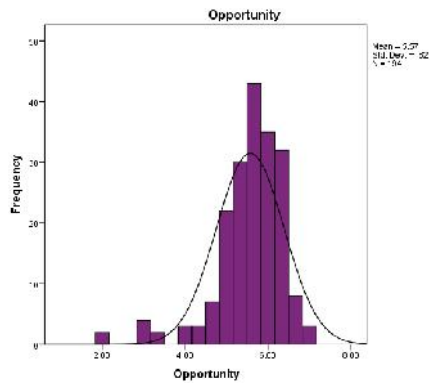
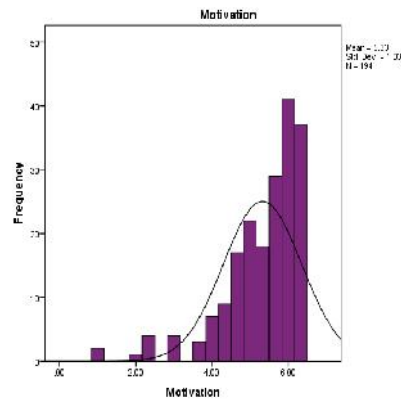
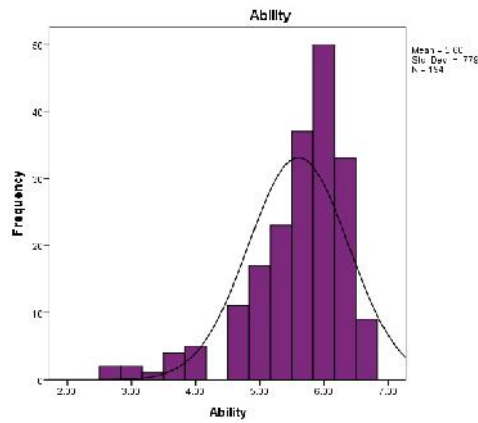


Table 12: Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Recruitment & Selection	.277	194	.000	.837	194	.000
Training and Development	.223	194	.000	.922	194	.000
Performance Appraisal	.110	194	.000	.952	194	.000
Compensation system	.141	194	.000	.938	194	.000
Communication and information sharing	.123	194	.000	.927	194	.000
Job Satisfaction	.135	194	.000	.938	194	.000
Affective Commitment	.134	194	.000	.964	194	.000
Trust in Management	.190	194	.000	.919	194	.000
Nepotism / Favoritism	.118	194	.000	.935	194	.000
Power Distance	.145	194	.000	.940	194	.000
Ability	.197	194	.000	.864	194	.000
Motivation	.181	194	.000	.831	194	.000
Opportunity	.170	194	.000	.865	194	.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 7 presents the results from two well-known tests of normality, namely the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test and the Shapiro-Wilk Test. The Shapiro-Wilk Test is more appropriate for small sample sizes (< 50 samples), but can also handle sample sizes as large as 2000. From the above table for all the factors p- value of the Shapiro-Wilk Test is less than 0.05. If it is below 0.05, the data significantly deviate from a normal distribution. If the **p-value** of the Shapiro-Wilk Test is greater than 0.05, the data is normal.

4.3 Reliability Analysis

Table 13: Reliability Analysis

Factors	No. of items	Mean	Cronbach's alpha
HPWS Practices	15	5.56	0.903
Recruitment & Selection	3	5.67	0.908
Training & Development	3	5.64	0.737
Performance Appraisal	3	5.70	0.871
Compensation system	3	5.28	0.906
Communication and information sharing	3	5.52	0.792
Employee Attitude	10	5.63	0.900
Job satisfaction	4	5.60	0.807
Affective commitment	3	5.69	0.764
Trust in Management	3	5.63	0.859
Institutional Context	6	4.34	0.823
Nepotism/Favoritism	4	4.13	0.730
Power distance	2	4.75	0.779
Employee Performance	9	5.50	0.864
Ability	3	5.60	0.762
Motivation	3	5.32	0.739
Opportunity	3	5.57	0.766

HPWS Practices

Table 8 presents the reliability analysis for each constructs. We measured HPWS Practices by using 15 items frequently used. These items involve five typical practices of HPWS Practices. Recruitment & Selection (e.g., The recruitment & selection practices in this organization are based on selective screening”), Training & Development (e.g., The training opportunities enable me to extend my range of skills and opportunities), Performance Appraisal (e.g., Performance appraisal is reviewed in accordance with organizational goals and needs), Compensation system (e.g., Organization provides competitive pay packages to all employees), and Communicating and information sharing (e.g., Employees at different levels within the organization are encouraged to interact with each other). The mean scores of all practices were measured to represent this variable and the Cronbach’s alpha was 0.903.

Employee Attitude

We employ a ten-item scale. These items involve three typical attitudes of employee. Job satisfaction (e.g., I have a job description that accurately describes the work I do), Affective commitment (e.g., I have good opportunities to advance my career by getting promoted) and Trust in Management (e.g., My immediate supervisor makes sure that all employee concerns are heard before decisions are made). The reliability alpha was 0.900.

Institutional context

This study used six-item scale. These items involve two typical context in institution context. Nepotism/Favoritism (e.g., Favoritism is not evident in the organization) and Power distance (e.g., In work related matters, managers have a right to expect obedience from their subordinates). The alpha value was 0.823.

Employee Performance

This study involves nine- item scale. These items involve three typical performance of employee. Ability (e.g., Do you think extensive training and development program in your organization helps you to perform well in your job), Motivation (e.g., Do you think your compensation and benefits are competitive comparing to other MNC’s in Bangladesh?) and Opportunity (e.g., Do you feel that you have good opportunities to share your views and suggestions to your colleagues and manager?). The alpha value was 0.864.

The study used reliability analysis for each multi-item scale using Cronbach’s alpha. The above table presents the results of the reliability analysis along with the descriptive statistics for each variable. Overall, the study reported good reliability with coefficient alphas ranging from 0.730 to 0.908 which demonstrated that scale demonstrates good reliability.

4.4 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

Table 14: Exploratory Factor Analysis

	Component					% of Variance
	1	2	3	4	5	
Compensation system						43.640
In our organization compensation is decided on the basis of competence of the employee.	.928					
I receive Performance bonus for the high performance of my department.	.918					
Organization provides competitive pay packages to all employees.	.666					
Recruitment & Selection						15.214
The recruitment & selection practices in this organization are based on selective screening.		.958				
In our organization, line managers and HR managers participate in hiring process.		.955				
All recruitment in this organization are based on merit (i.e. the best person for the job is selected regardless of their personal characteristics).		.816				
Performance Appraisal						9.676
I receive regular feedback from my manager on how well I do my job.			.836			
Performance appraisal is reviewed in accordance with organizational goals and needs.			.771			
Decision such as promotions, pay increase and training are linked with my performance appraisal.			.760			
Communication and information sharing						5.876
Employees at different levels within the organization are encouraged to interact with each other.				.798		

Employee suggestions are implement in full or in part within the organization				.679		
It is easy for me to communicate my thoughts to management.				.660		
Training and Development						
I get opportunity to discuss my training and development requirements with my line managers.					.720	5.091
I get trained for problem solving ability, interpersonal and communication skills in this organization.					.715	
The training opportunities enable me to extend my range of skills and opportunities.					.690	

Table 9 reveals the factor analysis related to HPWS Practices. The fifteen items are taken into a factor analysis. The total fifteen questions are reduced into five factors. The five factors are Compensation system, Recruitment & Selection, Performance Appraisal, Communication and information sharing and Training & development.

- ➔ Three items with inputs from employee were loaded under Factor one with loading ranging from 0.666 to 0.928. Hence it is named as “Compensation system”
- ➔ Three items were loaded under Factor Two with loading ranging from 0.816 to 0.958. Hence it is named as “Recruitment & Selection”.
- ➔ Three items were loaded under Factor Three with loading ranging from 0.760 to 0.836. Hence it is named as “Performance Appraisal”.
- ➔ Three items were loaded under Factor Four with loading ranging from 0.660 to 0.798. Hence it is named as “Communication and information sharing”.
- ➔ Three items were loaded under Factor Five with loading ranging from 0.690 to 0.720. Hence it is named as “Training & development”.

In addition, the number of factors to be extracted was also established by sketching the scree plot. The result of the scree plot is reflected in Figure 7. The scree plot graphs the eigenvalue against the factor number. From the fifth factor on, you can observe that the line is almost flat, meaning each successive factor is accounting for smaller and smaller amounts of the total variance.

Figure 7: Scree plot

